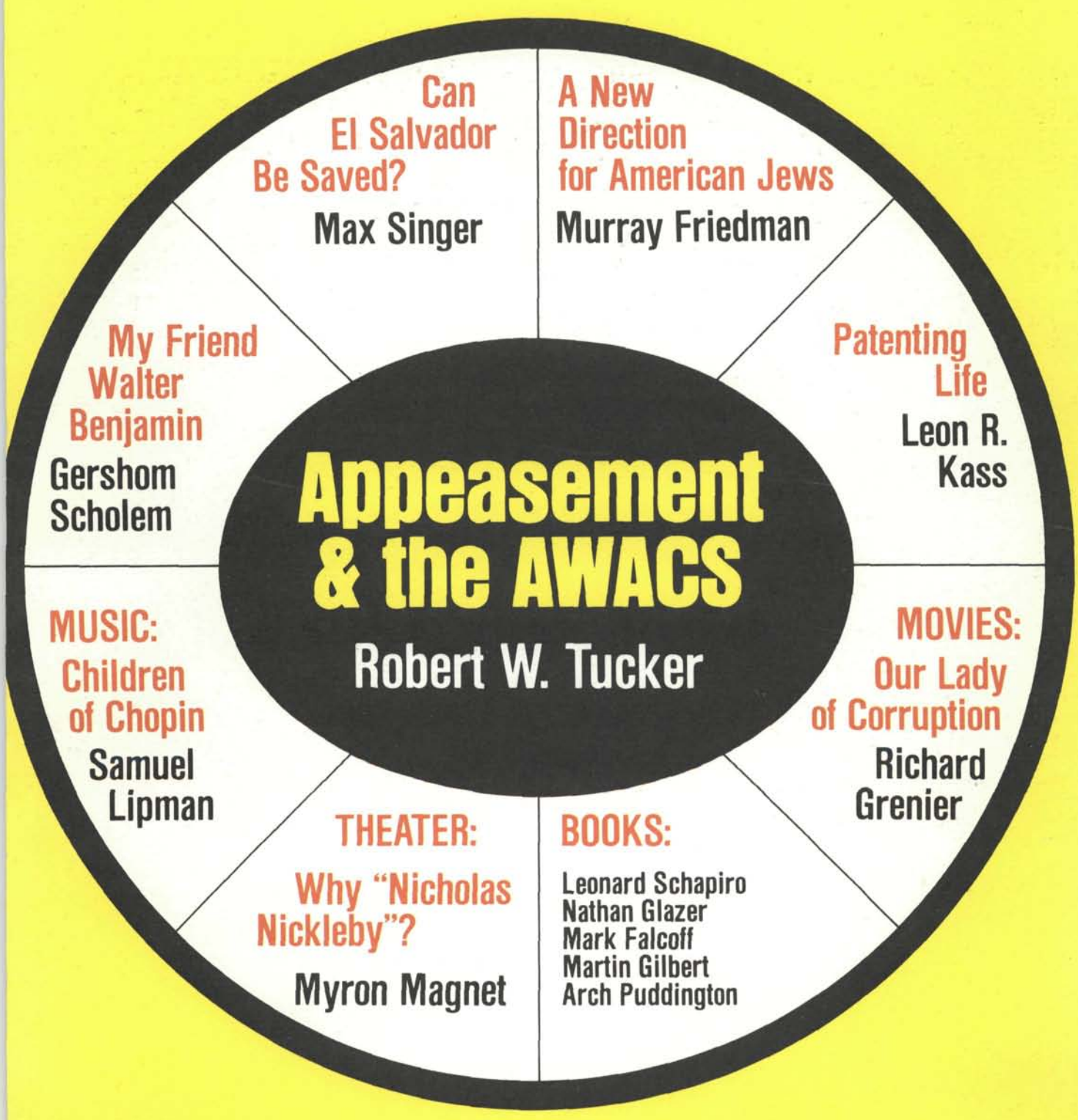
Commentary

Volume Seventy-two, Number Six, December 1981



Exchanges on "CBS vs. Defense" and "The Timerman Case"

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Commentary

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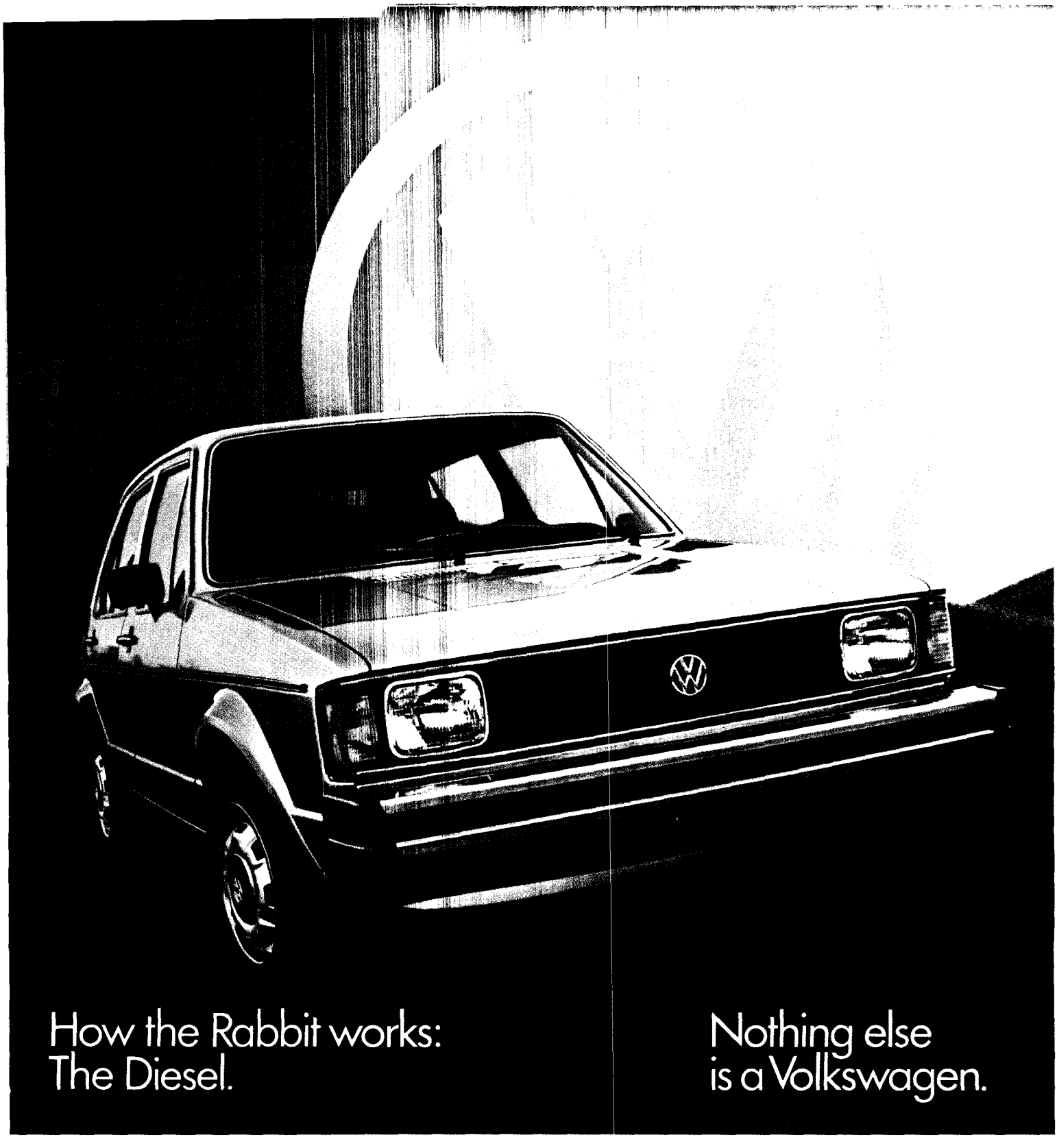

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Letters from Readers

"CBS vs. Defense"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We at CBS News are flattered, though not surprised, that COMMENTARY chose to devote so much space to an "analysis" of the recent CBS News documentary series, *The Defense of the United States* ["CBS vs. Defense," by Joshua Muravchik and John E. Haynes, September]. Nor, of course, were we surprised at the conclusions—since those conclusions obviously were formed long before our broadcasts aired.

Regardless of what Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes may believe, we set out, *without* preconception, to provide the American people with a balanced look at the defense dilemma facing this country today: the Soviet threat, the present state of our military forces, and how much we should spend on defense over the next five years.

In short, we asked—how much is enough? Although the authors seem to question the motives of CBS News and others in raising such a basic question, I should point out that no less a figure than OMB Director David Stockman appears to be doing the exact same thing, with support from Republican members of Congress and other Reagan cabinet members.

We answered our basic question fairly. So fairly, that for every voice from the Left which Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes so proudly quote as praising our series—thereby presumably tainting any validity which the series might otherwise be accorded—there is a William F. Buckley, Jr., who wrote that "CBS's extensive and in many ways brilliant five-part series on the problems of U.S. defense policy gave a lucid pictorial idea of what is involved in (a) catching up with the Soviet Union, while (b) making the correct decisions on where to place our scarce dollars."

And for every piece from the Right, such as the one COMMENTARY ran, there is a commentary from *Red Star*, the newspaper of the Soviet Defense Ministry, which wrote on July 6:

> *The Defense of the United States*—such a hypocritical title was given to a five-part documentary film shown by one of the leading U.S. television networks, CBS. The producers of the film have not set themselves the task to refute a widespread gross invention in the United States concerning the "Soviet military threat." Moreover, while claiming to give "only the facts," they present them in such combinations and in such a prepared manner that one cannot but have the impression that some of the installments were none other than a propaganda order from the Pentagon.
>
> And again the authors of the film retreat from an objective and honest answer to these questions. It is doubtful whether it was their task. On the contrary, in the fifth installment, there are more than enough sequences and scenes which are commissioned to mislead the American average man, to distort the essence and purposes of the Soviet peaceful foreign policy, to ascribe to the Soviet Army some "aggressiveness." Of course, there are no proofs.

Perhaps we should feel good about this series, not only because of its content, but because its attackers make up a rather interesting alliance of COMMENTARY, the American Security Council, and the Soviet Defense Ministry. A pretty good day's work in our book!

And perhaps we should feel good about this series because "analyses" such as the one in COMMENTARY are forced to distort what we said in an effort to make an ideological point. The general accuracy of the COMMENTARY article can best be shown by analyzing the following sentence: "The insistent ideological slant which informed CBS's presentation led it to make many erroneous or distorted assertions, but the most important error was one of omission. In five hours given to examining the plans for a U.S. military build-up, there was no mention—*none*—of the Soviet build-up which precipitated it."

Really? The authors had better get the fine-tuning on their sets adjusted.

From the first broadcast: "The Russians have put almost all their strategic eggs in the missile silos. They now have 1,400 missiles, with 5,000 warheads, and are still building new ones. To counter the Russian build-up, the Carter administration came up with this, a giant new missile, the MX. . . ."

From the second broadcast: "In

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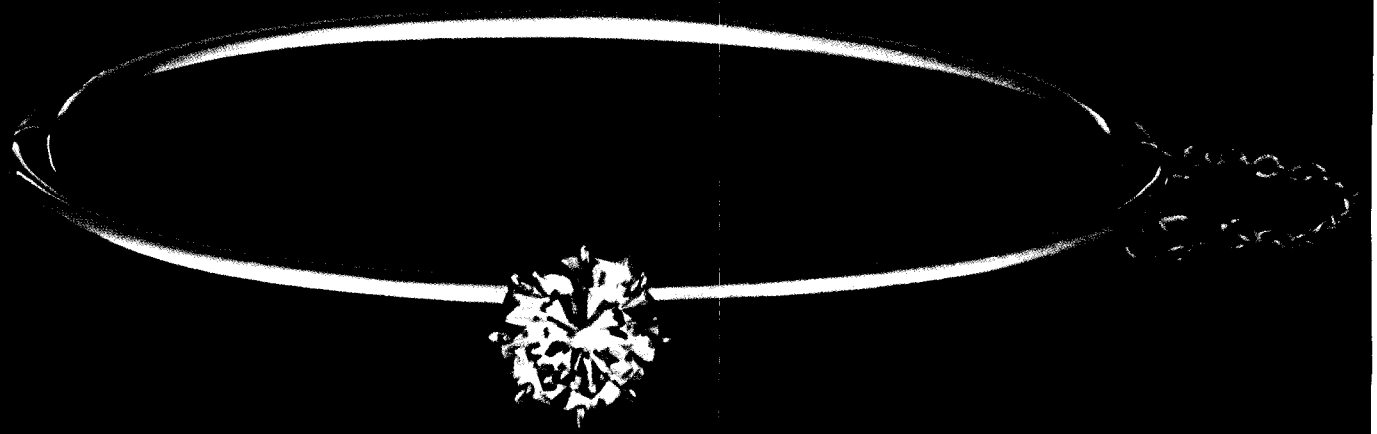
She can't wear a Ming vase to La Bohème.



Born out of fire and ice more than a hundred million years ago. Every diamond is unique. But a diamond this large is even more precious. A gift so rare, it can never be measured. Until you see the look in her eyes.

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Europe, no one has paid much attention to Russian tactical nuclear weapons along the East-West border—the long-range missiles in every Warsaw Pact country or the hundreds of bombers that can carry nuclear weapons. . . . But in 1977, the Soviets started to modernize. They built a new missile, the SS-20, a longer-range missile with three warheads. It has triggered a brand new arms race. . . . For the NATO high command, the SS-20 raised the stakes in Europe. In the late 70's, reports of the missile's accuracy raised fears of a Soviet preemptive strike. . . ."

From the third broadcast: "Standing here [near the Berlin Wall], your first thought is that a government that could do this could do anything, even go to war. Then a question: could we stop them? The statistics say no."

From the fifth broadcast (over pictures of a Russian missile design facility): "We think you're looking at a missile-design bureau, one of three in the Soviet Union that compete with each other like Ford and General Motors. For security reasons, they said we could not be given any specific information, but we do know that what you are seeing is part of an enormous missile-building program—a program that took off after the Russians were forced to back down in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. It was a turning point in their strategic planning—the humiliation they vowed they would never forget, and may account for the Russian resolve to produce so many of these missiles today. Three-quarters of their strategic strength is focused here, which puts them ahead of us in numbers of land-based missiles and warheads, though behind us in other crucial measurements of nuclear strength."

And there are other, similar quotes. The point here is not that our series necessarily agreed with the ideological biases of Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes, but simply that we repeatedly discussed the issue of the Soviet military build-up and its consequences for the United States. They didn't want to hear or see these references—and they didn't. That is their problem, as is the sloppy research which characterizes many of their other allegations.

The Defense of the United States was good television, in the best sense of that term. It caused viewers to think, to argue with each other, to question assumptions and ponder solutions. We remain extremely proud of this series.

BILL LEONARD
President, CBS News
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one of the producers of *Ground Zero* and *The Nuclear Battlefield* (the first two segments in the CBS News series, *The Defense of the United States*), I am deeply offended by Joshua Muravchik and John E. Haynes's article.

To suggest that we at CBS News engaged in a conspiracy to stage our own "guerrilla attack" would be just plain silly, if it weren't so serious. You don't have to be more than an irregular follower of Lou Grant to know that most news people are too ornery, too independent to be able to come to one single-minded conclusion. (In fact, the authors take us to task for not always being consistent, from one broadcast to the next. We weren't always consistent because the series was produced by a number of people who were given the freedom of independent work.)

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes try to make fun of executive producer Howard Stringer's comment that there has been insufficient debate on defense issues. Clearly, he was right. There has been a lot of talk and a lot of concern, but the issues are complicated, the numbers are easily manipulated, and the public is too often put off by obscure language and insufficient facts.

The article tries to prove a "CBS slant" by examining the credentials of some of the people interviewed on the broadcasts. Unfortunately, this examination is limited on facts and long on innuendos.

Example: Roger Mohlander,* a former staff member of the National Security Council under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter. The authors take us to task for failing to mention that Mohlander is currently an executive director of an organization called Ground Zero. When CBS News interviewed Mohlander he was still in the White House and his future was unclear.

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes seem to feel there was an extraordinary coincidence in the fact that the first segment in our series had the same title as Mohlander's new organization. Both are named "Ground Zero." But our documentary was in fact titled by people who had never met Roger Mohlander and who knew nothing about his post-White House plans. The coincidence undoubtedly grew out of the increasing awareness of nuclear-war terms and is a reflection of concern, not of an undercover political alliance.

As for the revelations about Drs. Tsipis and Geiger—it might have been interesting if Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes had chosen to debate these scientists' interpretations of Soviet intent; they seem more interested, however, in detailing Tsipis and Geiger's affiliations. To try to discredit Geiger on the basis of an article in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* and a photograph taken of him with Soviet analyst Georgi Arbatov seems like a simple attempt at guilt by association.

The technique appears again in the analysis of CBS's use of the term the "Iron Triangle" (a term given increasing currency in Washington circles to describe the military-industrial complex). Again, extended debate on the relationship among the Pentagon, Congress, and defense contractors could be valuable. Unfortunately, the authors try to dismiss the term (and the concept it conveys) by pointing out that it was also used as a book title by a man identified as the director of a "New Left organization," which is funded by men identified with "New Left causes."

Those of us old enough to have lived through the 50's find a fearful sense of *déjà vu* floating through this kind of logic.

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes (along with the American Security Council) also object to the CBS scenario which used one symbolic 15-megaton bomb to destroy SAC headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. Long before this scenario was filmed, it was discussed with a variety of strategists. While we all agreed it would be most unlikely for any enemy to attack the United States with one nuclear weapon, no strategist we talked to agreed with the authors' comment that "the Soviets would never expend a weapon that size just to destroy SAC headquarters. . . ." SAC, the central communications center for all U.S. strategic nuclear forces, is clearly regarded as a prime target. A large weapon, the experts say, would compensate for inaccuracy, for an ICBM that was modestly off-course.

* *Sic.* See p. 12—ED.

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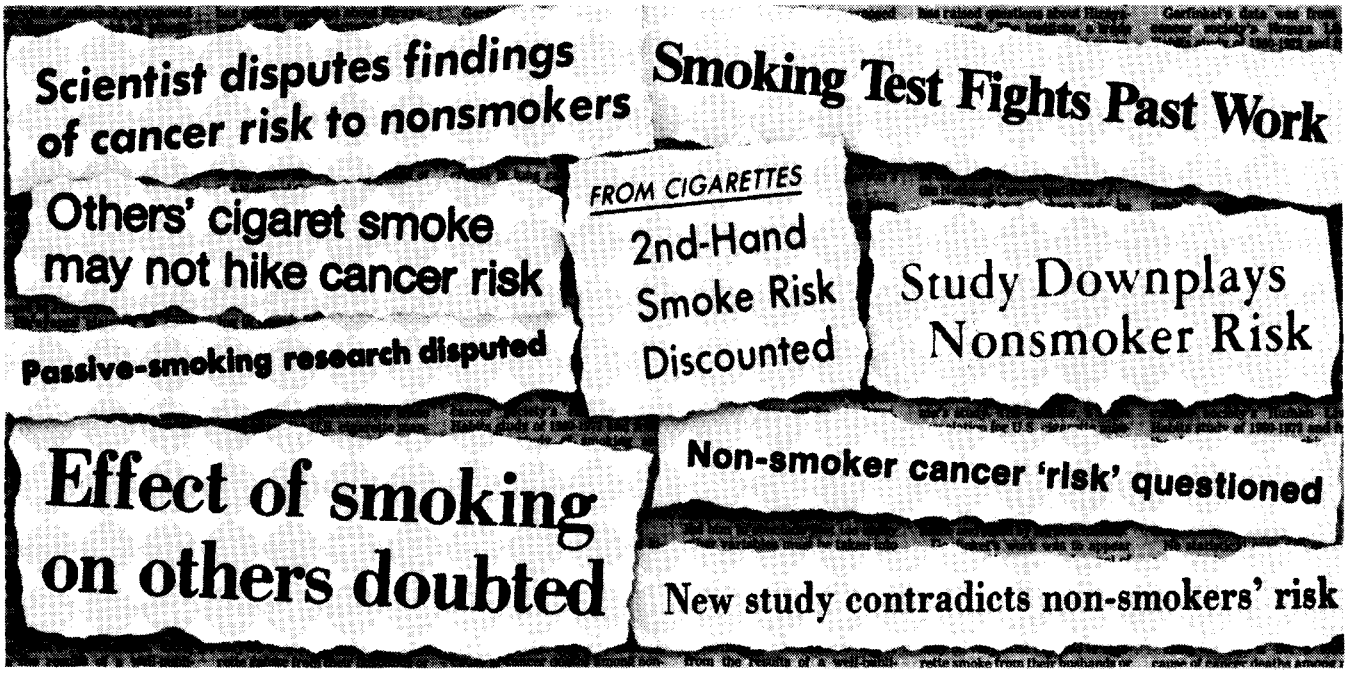
HERE'S WHAT'S NOW BEING SAID ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S CIGARETTE SMOKE.


Scientist disputes findings of cancer risk to nonsmokers
Smoking Test Fights Past Work
Others' cigaret smoke may not hike cancer risk
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FROM CIGARETTES
2nd-Hand Smoke Risk Discounted
Study Downplays Nonsmoker Risk
Effect of smoking on others doubted
Non-smoker cancer 'risk' questioned
New study contradicts non-smokers' risk

Several months ago, headlines around the world trumpeted alarming news. A Japanese study was claiming that non-smoking wives of smokers had a higher risk of lung cancer because of their husbands' tobacco smoke. That scared a lot of people and understandably so, if this claim was the last word.

But now new headlines have appeared. First, because several apparent errors are reported to have been found in the Japanese study—raising serious questions about it.

Second, because Lawrence Garfinkel, the statistical director of the American Cancer Society who is opposed to smoking, published a report covering 17 years and nearly 200,000 people in which he indicated that "second-hand" smoke has insignificant effect on lung cancer rates in nonsmokers.

For more information on this important public issue, write Scientific Division, The Tobacco Institute, 1875 I St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

BEFORE YOU BELIEVE HALF THE STORY, GET THE WHOLE STORY.

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A smaller warhead, even slightly off-target, might not do the job; a larger warhead would.

The article also seems to suggest that we went to considerable lengths to present U.S. defense planners as Dr. Strangeloves. Nothing could be further from the truth. For example: Admiral Powell Carter, the Navy's Director of Strategic and Theater Nuclear Warfare, not only has a primary decision-making job but is also one of the most thoughtful and literate men in the Pentagon. He is certainly not a stereotypical Dr. Strangelove. And General Kelly Burke, Air Force Chief of Research and Development, is another highly respected voice in the defense community.

The conviction that we were trying to portray Dr. Strangelove is supported by a quote from a young crewman at a missile site. Yet anyone who saw our broadcast knows very well that the senior officers were given the lion's share of time, the young soldier but a few moments.

As for the second broadcast, Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes are outraged at our stating that "some say a device like this [a U.S. tactical nuclear weapon] might be used to start World War III." They declare the idea baseless and preposterous. I hope they're right. But they must know that this very concern about U.S. short-range nuclear weapons is creating enormous pressure on a number of West European governments, is shaking the NATO alliance, and has already created tension between this country and its European allies.

For an American to understand what is behind the growing anti-American feelings overseas, he must have a basic picture of the U.S./NATO nuclear arsenal, its weapons and strategies. Most of our viewers had little information about the thousands of warheads on the continent. They did not know that U.S. weapons remain under U.S. control or that U.S. NATO policy retains the right of first use.

To understand why there are Europeans who believe that the trivialization of nuclear weapons could lead to their use, it is helpful to know that field commanders describe nuclear artillery in terms of combat-power ratios and that the U.S. Army general in charge of our tactical nuclear forces believes it possible for a war in Europe to swing back and forth between conventional and nuclear phases.

The authors say, "It is just not true that 'the Army insists' it must use tactical weapons." They are right, but their quote is not. Unfortunately they dropped an important modifier, although the statement is correctly quoted earlier in the article. Our script states, "The Army says it must *be able* to stop such an attack with battlefield nuclear weapons." There is quite a difference.

There is more in the article than any of us have the time or space to contend with (as I am sure there were hundreds of points in the five-hour series that Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes were unable to take on). What concerns me are not the disagreements over content. Disagreements are the noble business we are all in. I am, however, deeply distressed by the authors' tone.

We agree that we live in dangerous times. We may disagree on how we define the problems or on the solutions, but to suggest that the CBS News staff responsible for the defense series is less than honorable or any less committed to our country's well-being than the COMMENTARY authors, seems to me to diminish the very thing we are both trying to defend.

JUDY CRICHTON
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In their rush to discredit CBS and its series, *The Defense of the United States*, Joshua Muravchik and John E. Haynes slip too easily into misguided and ill-informed criticism.

For example, the authors are quick to criticize the scientists CBS interviewed who discussed the effects of a nuclear attack, principally because these scientists are active in the "peace movement." Is one to conclude, then, that membership in organizations like SANE, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War invalidates one as a source of expert opinion? CBS may have been negligent in not informing viewers of the scientists' organizational affiliations, but a fair-minded criticism of CBS would rely on the integrity and factual accuracy of the scientists' substantive contributions to the series, rather than on a broad-brushed dismissal of these professionals because of their devotion to the cause of peace. And what sinister conclusions do Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes want readers to draw from their observation that one interviewee, Dr. Jack Geiger, published a paper from an IPPNW conference in a magazine which also featured "a lead photograph of conference participant Georgi Arbatov," a Russian whose medical credentials the authors impugn (without substantiation)? Are we creeping into guilt-by-association here?

Conceding that experts have biases, one might conclude that CBS sought out only those experts who question the logic of the current arms race. But, in fact, CBS was careful to solicit opinions from those favoring current or expanded defense expenditures. These opinions are belittled by Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes, however, as "a good deal of footage of military brass," and dismissed as merely "a foil for CBS's biting critiques." Perhaps Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes have as low an opinion of military experts as they do of those in the "peace movement." In any case, CBS did fulfill its obligation to present meaningful opposing views. . . .

Even more disturbing about this critique of the CBS series is the authors' shallow understanding of fundamental tenets of defense and interest-group politics. They cite as telling evidence of CBS's liberal bias its choice of the term the "Iron Triangle" as a label for the process of arms procurement; they attribute this term to a publication released the week of the CBS broadcast by a group called the Council on Economic Priorities, backed by such leftists as Stewart Mott, Gordon Adams, and the Samuel Rubin Foundation. . . . In fact, however, the concept of the Iron Triangle dates back at least to the early 1960's (see, for example, Douglass Cater, *Power in Washington*). The term refers to the accommodating, low-visibility relationship among bureaucratic agencies, congressional committees, and private-interest groups. It is a relationship widely acknowledged to exist in most sectors—labor, agriculture, and commerce, as well as defense. The notion of Iron Triangles is a commonplace among introductory texts in American government and politics, and CBS should be commended for introducing a concept so widely accepted and used by students of politics. Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes's suspicion about CBS's use of this term would

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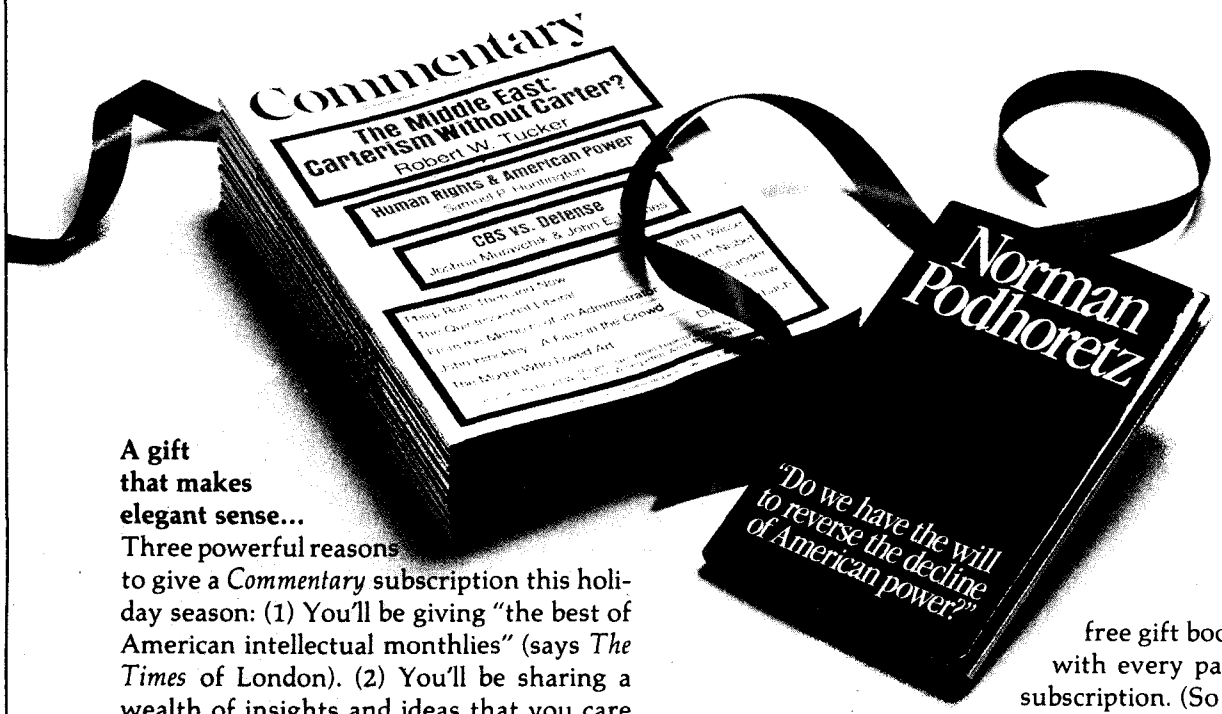
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--Henry Kissinger

"...Already the most discussed essay in recent memory...must reading for all concerned citizens."
—Arnaud de Borchgrave,
Former Chief Foreign Correspondent, *Newsweek*

"...Worthy of Tom Paine—an appeal for reason and action...."
—Eugene V. Rostow

"...A profoundly moving and enhancing book."
—Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

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be amusing if it weren't such an obvious commentary on their lack of expertise in the field.

The authors further criticize CBS for asserting that Soviet weaponry is not as sophisticated as that of the U.S. (and therefore perhaps we are more or less evenly matched with the Soviets)—a fact validated by examples such as tank and plane development. But they seem unaware of the tactical argument that mechanical simplicity on the battlefield is better, because complex weapons systems are more likely to break down under adverse battlefield conditions. Thus, greater numbers of less sophisticated weapons systems may serve to benefit the Soviets as in, for example, a tank engagement between Soviet tanks and our more sophisticated XM-1 tank.

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes also criticize CBS for pointing out that the U.S. possesses more warheads than the Soviets. They argue that there are other measures of nuclear strength "which are at least as important as numbers of warheads," and, presumably, the Soviets are ahead of us in these other areas. Without specifying exactly what these areas are, the authors allude to throw-weight (though this is not their label) as being of greater importance. Throw-weight is a reference to the number (weight) of warheads that can be delivered on target. In fact, the number of warheads (and their destructive capabilities) *is* the important consideration. The Soviets have bigger rockets capable of delivering heavier payloads, such as the SS-20, but the crucial question still is: how many warheads?

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes trumpet the fact that key congressional committees consistently slash Defense Department budget requests as evidence that defense-related committees are not part of an Iron Triangle where "you don't hear many hard questions" (they claim this is "blatantly false"—a laughable assertion to any outsider who has ever witnessed or studied a congressional hearing). This conclusion ignores budget gamesmanship—requests are inflated in expectation that they will be slashed—and the reality that most members of defense-related congressional committees, especially the powerful leaders, are more hawkish on defense and procurement matters than the average member of Congress. . . .

Messrs. Muravchik and Haynes decry the fact that CBS did not address the question of the Soviet arms build-up, but they miss the main question of the series—namely, are our defense dollars being well-spent, in accordance with logical priorities?

The rather simple-minded (but for TV, commendable) evaluation of U.S. defense by CBS has been surpassed by the even more simple-minded, hysterical, and ill-considered response of these two COMMENTARY writers. A rational debate on the Soviet arms build-up, and on America's appropriate response to it, is advanced by a substantive debate over the issues raised; it is not advanced by *ad hominem* tactics of attacking the debater rather than his arguments.

ROBERT J. SPITZER
SUNY Cortland
Cortland, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The devastating Muravchik-Haynes analysis of the CBS "guerrilla-attack" documentary on the U.S. rearmament program raises a question which needs answering: why would six nationally-known TV reporters—Cronkite, Rather, Reasoner, Bradley, Schieffer, Threlkeld—involve themselves in an exposé of the U.S. defense effort which the authors of the COMMENTARY article charge was full of "factual errors, distortions, misrepresentations"? Why would CBS News President Bill Leonard and the two producers avoid, as the writers charge, a discussion in the five-hour script of the Soviet arms build-up, and why would they use out-of-date figures on defense? These CBS people are known to most of us as good stand-up journalists. What would impel them to produce and participate in a "documentary" so loaded against "the emerging consensus in favor of rearming America"?

Reductiveness as to motive or conspiracy theories are insufficient to explain why CBS journalists would participate in or lend their names and reputations to so viciously deformed an enterprise. There is something in American culture which still lives by the slogan "no enemies on the Left." Walter Cronkite, as war correspondent, saw the destruction achieved by a politico-military dictatorship in a disarmed, democratic world. His colleagues know the events which led to World War II. Some of them have reported what the triumph of Communism has meant in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. And yet despite the history, the daily reports of Communism in operation from Afghanistan to Poland, the easily accessible texts of Soviet military publications which are quite clear about the USSR's world military-political strategy—despite all this, for CBS the U.S. and the USSR are simply mirror images of each other. And, if anything, the U.S. is just a little worse because the Pentagon is run by Dr. Strangeloves, none of whom resembles kindly, intelligent General Mikhail Milshtein, whose interview with Cronkite must be the classic case of Soviet disinformation visited on an American television audience.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
Naramata, British Columbia

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK and JOHN E. HAYNES write:

We find Arnold Beichman's diagnosis of the problem at CBS intriguing, but the letters of Bill Leonard and Judy Crichton suggest another possible diagnosis. They reveal a highly developed sense of self-righteousness combined with a poorly developed sense of precision—a perilous combination indeed.

Amid the invective, Bill Leonard makes two points; both are wrong. First he argues, quoting William F. Buckley, Jr., and *Red Star*, that those who favor strengthening U.S. defenses are just as likely to have applauded the CBS series as to have found fault with it and that those on the opposite side of the defense debate are equally divided. Including *Red Star* in this debate is something of a red herring. CBS would have had to go far indeed to have won the editorial approval of *Red Star*, given that Soviet eschatology holds the U.S. media to be nothing but tools of the ruling class. As for Buckley, Mr. Leonard might have given Buckley's next sentence, which chided CBS for "its failure to award itself sufficient credit for the disrepair of our defense system." We recently wrote to Buckley for additional clarification, and we quote, with permission, his reply: "I wrote carefully the statement [Leonard] quote[s], which I believe to be true. I don't see how CBS can argue with your specific criticisms, since they make an overwhelming case insofar as they focus on the planted axioms you discuss."

But Mr. Leonard is disingenuous

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when he says that the Buckley and *Red Star* quotes are just as representative as the quotes that we gave from the Washington *Star*, the *Village Voice*, the American Security Council, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. We have seen more than twenty articles about the CBS series. Among these, the Buckley and *Red Star* articles are not merely unrepresentative, they are unique. Every other article appearing in a journal generally favoring a strong defense—the Detroit *News*, the Dallas *Morning News*, the Washington *Star*, *Human Events*, *Accuracy in Media*, *Armed Forces Journal*, the *Retired Officer*, and others—was sharply critical. Every one appearing in a journal generally critical of U.S. defense efforts —the *Nation*, the *Village Voice*, the Minnesota *Daily*, the Washington *Post*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and others—was laudatory. Articles appearing in journals of no particular point of view on defense also generally concurred in identifying the advocacy in CBS's reportage. Thus *TV Guide* observed: "Not unlike 'The Selling of the Pentagon,' the series is remarkable, in the current political climate, for its sharp point of view."

We call Mr. Leonard disingenuous because he gives himself away. If he genuinely believed his series to be as likely to win the approval of hawks as of doves, why does he begin by sneering, "Nor, of course, were we surprised at the conclusions"?

Mr. Leonard's other point is to dispute our assertion that CBS made no mention of the Soviet build-up. To refute us, he quotes four fragments from the series. Each quote is removed from its context, which, in all four examples, was a passage designed to minimize the Soviet threat or to ridicule U.S. responses to it. But in context or out, all of Mr. Leonard's quotes don't add up to a mention of the Soviet military build-up as the term is usually used. Yes, CBS mentioned the growth in the Soviet ICBM force. Yes, it mentioned the SS-20. But two weapons do not a build-up make.

What is meant by the Soviet build-up is not the growth in any one, or two, or three weapons, but rather a vast, across-the-board increase and modernization of land, air, and sea forces; of conventional, tactical nuclear, strategic nuclear, and chemical weapons; of offensive and defensive and mobile forces; of troops and tanks and airplanes and ships and missiles. To make clear the import of the term, we quoted at length from former Secretary of Defense Brown's statement warning that military expenditures consume 11 to 14 percent of the Soviet GNP, exceed U.S. expenditures by 30-50 percent overall and by 85 percent in investment in hardware, and that the Soviet trend appears "to be aiming toward some sort of war-winning capability." It is the very breadth and depth of this military effort that give rise to two worries (worries that woud not arise from the expansion of any one or two weapons systems): (1) that the Soviet Union will gain overall military superiority over the United States; and (2) that Soviet intentions are less benign than many U.S. analysts had once believed. This is what has given currency to the term the "Soviet build-up." And it is this problem that received no mention—none at all—from CBS.

JUDY CRICHTON finds that we are "limited on facts and long on innuendos" and that our "simple attempt at guilt by association" creates "a fearful sense of *déjà vu*" in those who "have lived through the 50's": in short, we are McCarthyites. After reading this and the relentless stream of *ad hominem* attacks on us in Bill Leonard's letter, we find incongruous Miss Crichton's conclusion that what "distressed" her about our article was its "tone."

Miss Crichton takes us to task for "try [ing] to make fun of executive producer Howard Stringer's comment that there has been insufficient debate on defense issues." But CBS went further than saying there had been "insufficient debate." Stringer, as we reported, told the *Christian Science Monitor* that "We want to stimulate a debate which . . . CBS News President Bill Leonard felt *had never been started*" (emphasis added).

Miss Crichton defends CBS's not identifying Roger Molander (whose name she misspells) as executive director of Ground Zero, an organization opposed to the modernization of U.S. strategic forces, on the grounds that at the time CBS interviewed him he was still working in the White House. We don't know when CBS interviewed Molander. We do know that CBS aired its program in June 1981, many months after Molander left the White House, and it identified him on the air as someone whose White House service was in the past.

Miss Crichton accuses us of engaging in an "attempt at guilt by association" because we noted that Drs. Tsipis and Geiger are active in the peace movement, a fact that CBS did not tell its viewers. We disagree with Drs. Tsipis and Geiger on defense policy, but we don't regard them as guilty of anything. The only guilty party is CBS News which presented these two advocates as neutral "experts" and failed to provide a contrasting viewpoint.

Miss Crichton states that we dismissed the need to examine the relationship among the Pentagon, Congress, and defense contractors and instead simply pointed out that the CBS use of the term the "Iron Triangle" coincided with the publication of a book by the same name by an author associated with the New Left. But far from dismissing the issue, our article went into great detail to refute the caricature CBS presented of the military procurement system. Indeed, we spent more space on this than on any other subject. It is noteworthy that neither Miss Crichton nor Mr. Leonard defends that caricature or challenges any of the evidence we presented which discredited CBS's description.

The American Security Council, an organization made up in large part of retired military officers, found the CBS scenario of the use of a 15-megaton nuclear warhead on SAC headquarters improbable. We mentioned the issue and also noted that CBS's rebuttal—that the Soviets did possess some warheads of that size—was probably true. But our main concern was with what CBS didn't say. As we pointed out: "What went unmentioned in all this was the megatonage of *American* missiles; CBS never told its viewers that there is nothing nearly the size of 15 megatons in the U.S. arsenal. The submarine-based weapons which, as CBS pointed out, provide the U.S. with its most reliable retaliatory power are one-three-hundredth that size."

Miss Crichton criticizes our seeing a Dr. Strangelove theme in CBS's depiction of the U.S. military and points out that neither Admiral Carter nor General Burke sounded Strangelovian during their interviews. That is correct, and it may be why CBS immediately followed these officers' rational defense

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of the need for improved strategic weapons with a belittling editorial comment: "No general or admiral is ever likely to say enough is enough."

Miss Crichton takes pains to defend CBS's credulous report that "some say" that U.S. tactical nuclear weapons "might be used to start World War III." CBS would have been on firm ground had it said there are fears that such weapons might be the first *nuclear* weapons fired in World War III *if the Soviet Union began such a war* by undertaking a massive conventional invasion of Western Europe. NATO doctrine does allow for a tactical nuclear response to such an attack if NATO's conventional forces are overwhelmed; that is, of course, a fair subject for disagreement. But the fears to which CBS (and again Miss Crichton in her letter) lend such credit are that the U.S. would "start World War III," presumably by a NATO attack on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, using NATO's tactical nuclear weapons. Throughout its existence, NATO's doctrine, its weapons, its deployments have always been defensive. The only people who say that World War III might start with NATO aggression are Soviet spokesmen and Soviet apologists.

Miss Crichton asserts that we misquoted CBS. Actually, it is she who misquotes. She says the CBS script states: "The Army says it must *be able* to stop such an attack with battlefield nuclear weapons." The copyrighted transcript provided by CBS says: "The Army insists it must be able to stop such an attack with battlefield nuclear weapons." Miss Crichton has substituted a weak "says" for a strong "insists" and added emphasis where there was none. In our article we quoted the entire sentence exactly as it appears in CBS's transcript. At another point we (correctly) quoted the first three words ("The Army insists") from the same sentence.

Miss Crichton's letter reinforces our judgment of what CBS was trying to convey. She credits the charges of European pacifists and neutralists that American weapons, not Soviet ones, are the problem, and she invokes a Strangelovian image of American soldiers by noting ominously that "it is helpful to know that field commanders describe nuclear artillery in terms of combat ratios. . . ." She tries to

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make this invocation seem more innocent than it is by misrepresenting the issue of the theater-nuclear-weapons debate. The issue is not whether "trivialization of nuclear weapons could lead to their use." Of course it could. The issue is whether U.S. policy does in fact trivialize those weapons. Any serious examination of U.S. doctrine and presidential restrictions on the use of nuclear weapons would, in our opinion, suffice to show that it does not. CBS (and Miss Crichton in her letter) attempt to preempt that examination by pretending to find significance in the discovery that soldiers use military jargon.

Finally, Miss Crichton's last two paragraphs concede the main point of our article. She says that "disagreements are the noble business we are all in" and she implies that the members of the CBS news staff are just as entitled to get across their opinions as are contributors to COMMENTARY. COMMENTARY, as its name suggests, is a journal of opinion. CBS News is a licensed oligopolist and is under legal, and in our opinion moral, obligation in its news documentaries to observe the policy expressed a few years ago by Walter Cronkite: "I give you the news, and I don't help you make the judgment. . . . I don't share the philosophy that it is good to resort to personal opinion [just] because we cannot be 100 percent objective."

WE SUPPOSE that Judy Crichton's complaint about our "tone" should have prepared us, but we are still startled by Robert J. Spitzer who describes our article as "misguided," "ill-informed," "shallow," "lack [ing] expertise," "laughable," "simple-minded," "hysterical," and "ill-considered," and who concludes by admonishing us that "rational debate . . . is not advanced by *ad hominem* tactics."

Our reference to Dr. Geiger's activity in the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War did not imply any "sinister" conclusions. IPPNW is a group of Western and Soviet physicians whose stated goal is to warn their respective governments of the dangers of nuclear war. We did not suggest that any of the Western participants in IPPNW are unpatriotic or pro-Communist. In our view, Western physicians who participate in such an "even-handed" enterprise have grievous illusions about the relationship between Soviet physicians and their government, the nature of which is illustrated by the participation in the Soviet delegation to IPPNW of Georgi Arbatov, whose medical credentials Mr. Spitzer taxes us with impugning. Russia has many secrets, but Arbatov's lack of medical credentials is not one of them. He heads the Institute of the USA and Canada, which is not an academic unit but a KGB-linked arm of the Soviet government that undertakes policy-oriented research on North America and designs propaganda and disinformation operations against the U.S.

Mr. Spitzer is correct in stating that the term the "Iron Triangle" has been in use for some years to describe the relationship among bureaucratic agencies, congressional committees, and private-interest groups. However, it has commonly been used to refer to domestic, non-defense programs. CBS's use of the term to apply to defense is new, and it coincides with the publication of a New Left book of that title which uses the phrase in the exclusive military sense which CBS gives it.

Mr. Spitzer argues that Congress has not really cut defense budgets; all that has occurred, according to him, is a game in which artificially inflated budgets were cut back to levels truly, but secretly, desired by the military. In fact, defense outlays in FY 1979 were 29 percent lower in constant dollars than they had been in 1969; discounting funds spent to prosecute the war in Vietnam, the real dollar reduction over that decade was 11 percent. This leaves only two possibities. Either the Iron Triangle portrayed by CBS doesn't exist, or if it does, it is a pacifist cabal.

Mr. Spitzer's venture into the subject of nuclear weaponry is a muddle. Referring to ICBM's he says: "The Soviets have bigger rockets . . . such as the SS-20." The SS-20 is not an ICBM at all, but a theater weapon. The big Soviet ICBM's are the SS-18, its predecessor the SS-9, and, to a lesser degree, the SS-19. It is simply false to say that "the crucial question . . . is: how many warheads?" Other crucial questions are: how many warheads of what size; of what accuracy; of what survivability; aimed at what targets; facing what defenses? To say that the way to measure strategic nuclear strength is to count warheads and see who has more is to say that all warheads are equal. But it is silly to suggest that a 40-kiloton warhead on an American Poseidon missile is a one-for-one equivalent of the warhead on the Soviet SS-18 (mod 1); the warhead on the latter has an explosive power of 24-megatons, some *600* times more powerful than the Poseidon warhead.

We said that CBS had mentioned the U.S. lead in warheads without mentioning other equally crucial measures by which Soviet weapons have the advantage. Our conviction that such unbalanced reporting is inexcusable in regard to a subject about which the general public knows little is confirmed by the example of the confusion exhibited by Mr. Spitzer.

"The Timerman Case"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mark Falcoff ["The Timerman Case," July] is to be commended for tackling the Timerman controversy from a Latin American angle and giving the reader a unique insight into the ideological jungle that prevails in Argentina as well as for pointing out the oversimplification inherent in labeling as "Nazi" the goings-on in that crisis-ridden nation.

Mr. Falcoff quotes a few paragraphs on the link between Jacobo Timerman and David Graiver from my article, "Don't Rescue Latin American Jews!" (*Midstream,* December 1980). Since these passages seem to have become of critical importance in the ongoing controversy and since any reference to this link has been considered by the Timerman camp to be hostile, defamatory, and even part of an "orchestrated campaign of character assassination," I would like to point out how innocent my original mention of the Graiver connection was. . . .

I wrote my article after a visit to Argentina in the summer of 1979 when Timerman was still under house arrest. . . . At the time I wrote, there was no conservative or neoconservative anti-Timerman "conspiracy". . . (as if one article by Irving Kristol and a few columns by William F. Buckley, Jr., can amount to a conspiracy). Reagan was not yet President and the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes was not yet part of American foreign policy. I did not belong to any ideological cabal. I simply reported what every-

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body in Buenos Aires knew—namely, that Timerman was arrested because of his business association with David Graiver, who was dead and suspected of having been the investment broker of the ransom-exacting Montoneros terrorists. In other words, Timerman was arrested for a misfortune on the entrepreneurial level. It did not occur to me that I was revealing a secret, or that Timerman would try to keep it a secret. . . .

My article scarcely caused a ripple when it appeared. Only in combination with Timerman's book did it create a stir. Irving Kristol, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, pointed to the discrepancy between what I had said in my article and Timerman's surprising omission of any mention of Graiver in his book. A member of the editorial staff of the same paper asked Timerman point-blank about Graiver, whereupon Timerman answered painfully: "The questions you are asking me, these are the questions they were asking me when I was tortured."

Which was a surprising confession. As Mr. Falcoff points out in his article in discussing this matter, in the book Timerman describes his torture sessions at great length but nowhere does he mention any questions about Graiver.

It is irrelevant whether David Graiver was a crook or another Captain Dreyfus (as Timerman, who himself likes to be compared to Dreyfus, now claims). It is irrelevant whether Graiver was indeed the investment broker of the Montoneros. It is irrelevant whether the authorities managed to prove the connection between Graiver who is dead and the Montoneros who are also dead or in exile or in hiding. It is irrelevant whether Timerman knew or did not know about the Graiver-Montoneros connection, if such indeed existed.

What matters is that Graiver was Timerman's associate on *La Opinión* and that Timerman's ordeal was caused by his link with Graiver who was, rightly or wrongly, suspected of the Montoneros connection. What also matters is that all along this fact was common knowledge in Argentina and that Timerman deliberately wanted to withhold this knowledge from the readers of his book.

Why? Because mentioning Graiver, etc. would have spoiled the carefully nurtured pretense that Timerman was jailed for investigating the disappearence of Argentinians believed to be victims of government-inspired violence. It would reduce Timerman from a junta-challenging hero to a bank swindler's fall-guy. It would give support to the opinion prevalent among Buenos Aires's Jews that Timerman was arrested neither because he was a Jew nor because he was a newspaperman.

(Yet once he descended into Argentina's Hades, his Jewishness served as a goad to his torturers. As President Videla, who all along was against his detention, said with remarkable candor in a private audience: "Timerman was not arrested as a Jew. But being Jewish did not exactly help.")

Thus the Timerman controversy is the consequence of a self-inflicted wound and not of any orchestrated cabal. Because—and this has not yet been fully grasped—the doctoring of the Graiver factor undermines Timerman's credibility. He who can omit facts may be tempted also to add facts . . . .

The question may be asked: so what? So Timerman is not a knight in shining armor! Perhaps he has dramatized a bit. Does this change the basic thrust of his message?

I'm afraid it does. Anti-Semitism is an Argentinian fact of life and should be exposed by all means. But dramatization means distortion, enough distortion perhaps to explain why Argentina's Jews are not in the least worried about an impending Holocaust . . . .

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The article on Jacobo Timerman is an extremely interesting and quite thorough exposition of a complicated case. But it would have been all the more convincing and a great deal less unfair had the author resisted the urge to slam COMMENTARY's usual whipping boys on the "American Left." He seems much more interested in attacking Anthony Lewis and other opponents of the Lefever-Kirkpatrick mentality than in merely setting the record straight. He seems to take more satisfaction in exposing Timerman's connections with Graiver and Videla than in exploring the extent of Timerman's suffering while in captivity or the depravity of his captors. . . .

JORDAN C. BAND
Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think Mark Falcoff's argument is tendentious, especially in the crude analogy he makes between anti-Semitism in Argentina today and anti-Semitism in America in the 1920's. Argentine anti-Semitism is *sui generis*, neither an imitation of Nazi Germany nor of America. It is simply there, having grown out of Argentina's social and political culture, and it is exemplified in Timerman's experience.

The present effort to make not fine but broad and basic distinctions between authoritarian and totalitarian states creates the belief that authoritarian states are only repressive on an ad hoc basis and that except for an occasional uprising, authoritarian regimes will in time moderate into more democratic states. It is more likely that what we are witnessing is the same species in different stages of development. . . .

To argue that authoritarian states are fixed entities without the possibility of becoming totalitarian is to coin capricious definitions of political societies. Totalitarianism comes in all colors: Soviet red, Nazi brown, Amin's black.

I suspect that the current talmudic pedantry about authoritarianism and totalitarianism can only discredit legitimate civil, democratic movements from public expression. When authoritarian repressions are directed against moderates, the lists of terrorists grow.

CHARLES ANSELL
Sherman Oaks, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In commenting on "The Timerman Case," I wish to address myself solely to the comparison of Argentina to Nazi Germany, made by Timerman and questioned by Mark Falcoff. In my opinion, there is a great deal of similarity to the early period of the Hitler regime during which I was a resident of Germany. In Germany, latent anti-Semitism dating back a long time provided a fertile ground for making the Jew the scapegoat; this eventually led to the Final Solution. Though we hope that Argentina will not descend into that hell, the preconditions are present and it would require only some further economic, political, or military upset to trigger the genocide of the Argentine Jews.

Mr. Falcoff's argument that "in Argentine society as a whole the regime confined its interests to peace

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and public order" also describes perfectly the first stage of the Nazi regime, the period before 1938. The old-time nationalists who despised the crude Nazis were won over when they came to see that the strong-arm methods of the Nazis ended the fratricidal strife which had torn Germany apart in the dying years of the Weimar Republic. Though Hitler disliked the Junkers and their army, he knew how to gain their support by encouraging the feeling of revenge against the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty. And the business community and industry were wooed with the prospect of large profits to be made from rearming and the prohibition of strikes.

In Argentina, the latent dispute with Chile could serve the regime to gain the united support of the various factions of the military; it would help overcome the scruples of those whom Washington still likes to classify as "moderates" in converting Argentina into a totalitarian state with its native form of a Holocaust of the Jews and Gentile dissenters.

During the first five years of the Nazi regime, in spite of what Hitler had written in *Mein Kampf*, the general belief in Germany as well as abroad was that having finally gained control of the government, the Nazis would become "reasonable." No one could possibly conceive of the Final Solution. The Jews drifted into second-class citizenship in slow stages—in repetition of what had happened so often during their history. But the concept of a Holocaust would have been denied by 99 percent of the German population, non-Jews as well as Jews. All that started to change in 1938.

Mr. Falcoff's quotation from Robert Cox, editor-in-chief of the Buenos Aires *Herald*, that "If labels must be applied, Argentina could best be described as feudalistic and anarchic. . . ." could equally have described life in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1938. Conditions varied from region to region. In their effort to gain maximum support for their program from as many groups as possible, especially from the influential and wealthy German nationalists, the Nazis pursued a policy which could be called laissez-faire/laissez-aller toward business and industry. The regime did not interfere as long as business went along with the overall goal of rebuilding Germany's military might for later use by the Nazis. . . .

There were also no "boat people" in these first five years. Jews could and did emigrate freely, many with all their belongings. But due to the extreme shortage of hard currency—which the government hoarded for purchase of raw materials for its war industry—it was difficult if not impossible to transfer funds. However, in the early years of the Nazi regime many wealthy members of the Jewish community were assisted by Gentile business friends in saving at least part of their assets; these non-Jews probably wished to "reinsure" their own future abroad.

In 1936, I was summoned by the military to be mustered into the German armed forces along with all other young Germans and I spent a full day in the local armory undergoing a thorough physical examination by several medical specialists, as everybody else did on that day. In a German version of Catch-22, at the end of the mustering process I received a standard military passport from the German Wehrmacht, dated April 21, 1936, which I still have in my possession, giving all my personal data including religion: *mosaisch* (meaning Jewish), but then in the predictable classification: unacceptable. In 1935, I had also received a five-year German passport for foreign travel, without the stamp "Jew" which was added only in later years. I am giving these details just to show that at the beginning of the Hitler regime a certain bureaucratic anarchy prevailed. The turning point, as I recall, came with the infamous *Kristallnacht* in 1938, after the regime had been stabilized. . . .

I have criticized German Jewish leadership for not recognizing the seriousness of this slide until it was too late, although there were mitigating circumstances. Germany's Jews were mostly in the middle- to upper-economic bracket; they had taken root in Germany over many, many years. They had fought alongside their non-Jewish fellow citizens in German wars and won distinctions on the battlefield. They had contributed to Germany's economy, science, and arts and thus helped make Germany a respected nation throughout the world. They felt they had the right to live in Germany and consider themselves Germans in every respect. . . .

Most of this resembles the status of the Jews in Argentina at the present time. Unfortunately, the German Jewish leadership told us to stand on our rights as German citizens, to believe in the ultimate justice of our cause. They should have advised us to forget all these high principles and to leave Germany while we still could; then 90 percent of the German Jews would have been saved. Were I living in Argentina at this time I would not take the chance that "No Final Solution is under way in Argentina," as Mr. Falcoff so confidently assures us; I would leave without delay. There may not be a Final Solution in Argentina of the type we witnessed in Nazi Germany; it may take on an Argentine form equally impossible to imagine in advance.

Argentine sympathy with German and Italian fascism before, during, and after World War II is a historical fact we must not forget. If Timerman's book has done nothing else but give an eleventh-hour warning, it will have done more for Argentine Jewry than was ever done for the Jews in Germany in the first five years under Hitler. I hope the Jews in Argentina will not listen to Mr. Falcoff's description of the Argentine regime as only having "confined its interests to peace and public order"; the time may be approaching in the not too distant future when it, too, will be "extending them to a reshaping of institutions along totalitarian lines" as we experienced in Germany.

WALTER A. SHELDON
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was interested to learn in Mark Falcoff's article that " . . . a blanket repression is often the only means which offers any hope of success . . . but in the end the job can be done, if the will is there to do it."

I assume that "success" means that left-wing terrorists have been wiped out by thugs of the Right and Argentina lives happily ever after.

In the process, however, what of those innocent suspects (to whom he refers) numbering in the thousands in Argentina who never emerge? Are we to forget them, or should we work in every way we know how for their release, just as we would for the release of prisoners of conscience everywhere?

For some time now I have been concerned with the case of Mario Zaraceansky, an attorney and for-

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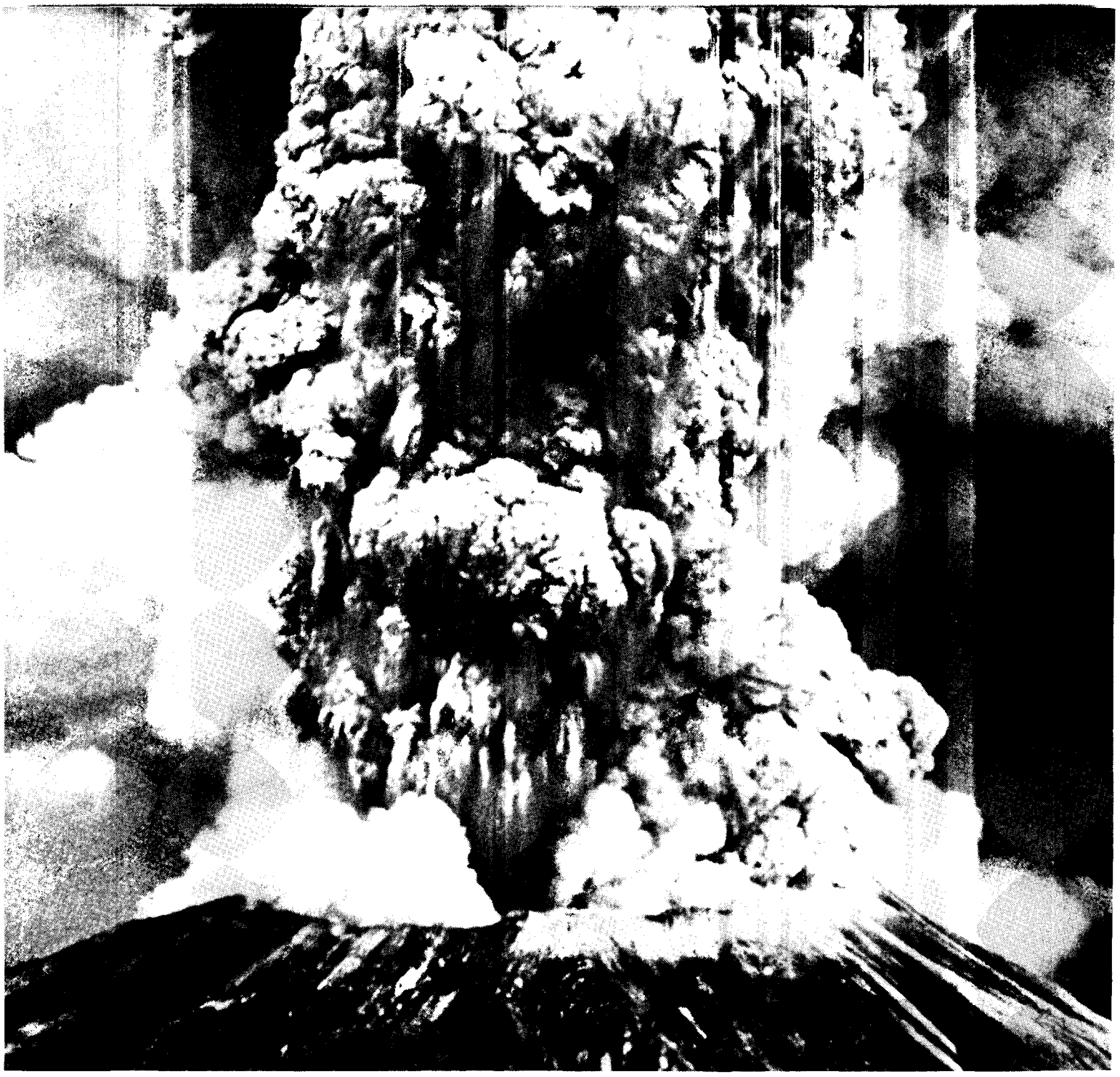

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mer faculty member of the University of Cordoba and an administrator of its School of Social Services. He has been held since 1977 in preventive detention. He is not a terrorist, has made substantial contributions to his society, and has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Rather than acquiesce in necessary repression, as Mr. Falcoff does, or talk of quiet diplomacy, as our President does, I would be happy if your readers would write to the President of Argentina, Roberto Eduardo Viola, calling for the right of option, that is, the right to emigrate, to be granted to Mr. Zaraceansky. . . .

LEONARD A. GORDON
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Comments by a number of people in San Francisco with ties in Argentina prompted me to seek out Jacobo Timerman at the 1980 Hadassah convention in Los Angeles. The people I had spoken to insisted that Timerman's plight in prison was *not* a Jewish cause, since he had few ties to the Argentine Jewish community. Questioned about this, Timerman poured his heart out to me. He insisted that he had always been a Zionist and that his newspaper always took a Zionist stand. He admitted that his Judaism had lapsed when his father died when he was young, but that it reawakened when he was imprisoned, especially with the concern a number of Argentine rabbis had for him. Judaism, he told me, had become his solace in his years of confinement. . . .

The one thing that stands out in my mind was Timerman's conviction about what he believed the Argentine Jewish community faced, regardless of what had happened to him.

Whether Timerman's plight is a human-rights or a Jewish issue, I had to admire his frankness and concern for his fellow Jews in Argentina, whatever they thought of him. Maybe his imprisonment had allowed him to see the "handwriting on the wall."

PEGGY A. ISAAK
San Francisco *Jewish Bulletin*
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The real significance of the Timerman case is to focus attention on a government which is guilty of perpetrating inhuman treatment on numbers of its innocent citizens, and *not* that in the world of practical politics we should remain dispassionate and act only in the context of our overall foreign-affairs strategies.

The story of Jacobo Timerman's brave exposure and subsequent suffering at the hands of an ignorant and cruel regime is conceded by Mark Falcoff; then why go to such lengths to discredit Timerman by introducing irrelevant, peripheral details? It is cynical to call Timerman "not a great defender of liberal democratic values" in order to offset the widespread support and interest which his book has aroused. To water down threats to human freedom is to endanger our belief in fundamental universal justice. . . .

JOE RAPOPORT
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If there is no better place to conceal a well-grounded charge than among a host of ludicrous accusations, the Argentine government should be delighted by the liberals' response to Jacobo Timerman's book. The most recent illustration of this is provided by Michael Walzer's article on Timerman in the *New York Review of Books* where, among other displays of well-meaning fantasy, he reports that most Argentine psychoanalysts have been murdered by the government. It appears that liberal commentators have approached Timerman's book in the spirit in which the Pope would approach the Bible, as if it were improper to check up on the alleged facts. One must therefore be grateful to Mark Falcoff for his effort to compare claims with facts. As a daily reader of Timerman's newspaper, I can vouch for the accuracy of what Mr. Falcoff has to say about it, and also of most of what he has to say concerning Timerman. In addition to this, Mr. Falcoff must be praised for his accurate, indeed understated, description of the nightmare which developed in Argentina as a result of years of left-wing terrorism, first promoted and then tolerated by the Peronist governments and by progressive middle-class intellectuals.

Regrettably, Mr. Falcoff's analysis goes beyond the anecdotes of the Timerman case to draw conclusions of a general nature about the character of the Argentine regime, and here he goes as badly astray as his liberal counterparts. His basic mistake is, in fact, the same which has inspired most liberal commentators: like them, he has assumed that the Timerman case is typical and that from an analysis of its circumstances one can draw a conclusion as to the nature of the Argentine system. Liberals, encouraged by a few unreasonable remarks of Timerman's, have raised the issue of a forthcoming Holocaust in Argentina, a topic that can be taken seriously only by those whose knowledge of South America derives mostly from Peter Ustinov's or Woody Allen's movies. From this, they have concluded that the Argentine political situation deserves to be seen in the light of those which developed under Hitler and Stalin. Conservatives, on the other hand, have found flaws in Timerman's character and gaps in his account; moreover, they have emphasized Timerman's own account of a struggle within the government between "moderates" and "radicals"; and they have noted the relatively happy ending of it all. Assuming now that the Timerman case is typical, they conclude that the Argentine leaders should not be compared with Hitler or Stalin but, rather, with Dirty Harry (they are not totalitarian but authoritarian).

The basic charge to be examined by anyone trying to evaluate the character of the Argentine regime is not that a Holocaust is on its way, or even that many people have gone through troubles comparable to Timerman's; the basic charge is that for years the Argentine armed forces have been kidnapping, torturing, and murdering thousands of defenseless civilians. Two questions may be raised in connection with this charge: (1) are the allegations true? and (2) are the armed forces (i.e., the government) responsible, or does the responsibility fall on the shoulders of a small lunatic fringe within them?

I take it that outside Argentina very few people with a minimum of information and common sense would hesitate on how to answer the first question. Some of us are unfortunate enough to have very direct evidence of the truth of those allegations; an objective record of the relevant facts can be found, for example, in the OAS report on *The Human Rights Situation in Argentina*. It is on the second charge that most supporters of

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the present regime will concentrate. Their line is, like Mr. Falcoff's, the following: sure, awful things have happened in Argentina in the last few years; and, sure, some people in the armed forces have behaved like animals. This, however, was not the result of a concerted effort by the armed forces but the unfortunate outcome of a period of inevitable anarchy within them, where moderate and radical officers were fighting for the control of "the Process." If the forces of evil were let loose for a while, the moderates appear to have gained control of the situation.

How plausible is this account? On the most conservative of estimates, during the first three years of the current regime about six thousand people ("countless thousands," if we count dead Argentinians the way Mr. Falcoff counts exiled Cubans) were kidnapped and "disappeared" never to return. Adjusting for differences in population, I would invite the American reader to imagine that, after a period of social turmoil, the military were to take over the U.S. government, and that during three years some fifty people are kidnapped every single day by heavily armed people driving cars without license plates. Imagine that the police never interfere with the highly conspicuous movements of these people; that during most of these operations the kidnappers leave a wealth of fingerprints; that there are usually witnesses quite capable of contributing to the identification of the kidnappers; but that when the kidnappings are reported to the police they invariably do absolutely nothing about it. . . . Imagine, moreover, that the state-controlled media ignore these daily disappearances and that the media brand those who express concern about them as potential subversives. Now ask yourself: how inclined would you feel under those circumstances to draw a distinction between the good guys and the bad guys in power? On these basic facts Mr. Falcoff is revealingly silent. The only, shocking reflection they elicit from him is this: "As is necessarily the case in an urban setting where the forces of order must contend with the virtual invisibility of the enemy, a blanket repression is often the only means which offers any hope of success. In such situations—let us not mince words—the distinction between terrorist and suspect—indeed, between innocent and guilty, is often lost—but in the end the job can be done, if the will is there to do it." I am sorry to say that if this means anything at all, it means that lynching is sometimes fine.

There is one final point I would like to make concerning a particularly offensive attitude of Mr. Falcoff's. He correctly notes that the Argentinian population appears to be far less excited than American liberals about the human-rights record of the military government. Whereas complaints in Argentina about the economic record of the government are daily and increasingly vociferous, public *and* private complaints about the human-rights record are nearly nonexistent. This is not the contemptible attitude that the professional moralists of the Left would take it to be (they would surely do no better in similar circumstances); but neither is it, as Mr. Falcoff appears to think, a sign of local wisdom that has somehow escaped the editorialists of the New York *Times*.

The Argentine silence in the face of an unprecedented display of immorality by the state is, perhaps, the most degrading social fact of contemporary Argentine history. The very last thing we need is an American professor acting as a cheerleader and telling us that we are doing fine. Evidently, Mr. Falcoff does not have the slightest idea of the way social pressures, when sufficiently threatening, may force people's perceptions into adjustment. The attitude of the Argentine population is the tragic but inevitable and, in the end, excusable behavior of persons forced to live under an appallingly immoral and degrading system; of persons who know that the price to be paid for essential dissent is literally incalculable, and who have reason to fear that the only realistic alternative to their system of government is an equally brutal version of populism. They are thereby forced to readjust their perception of things so as to make daily life bearable. It is very easy to excuse our moral blindness. It is less easy to excuse Mr. Falcoff's.

ALBERTO COFFA
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

MARK FALCOFF writes:

When the editors of COMMENTARY invited me to offer some thoughts on the Timerman case, I accepted, even though I suspected that I was not likely to receive many bouquets for my efforts. In fact, just before the article appeared (though its existence had already been reported in the press), a prominent New York journalist asked me point-blank, with honest amazement, "Aren't you afraid of the consequences?" I replied that I really wasn't, since I could bring to bear on the matter something which almost no one else who had written on the case really possessed—a thorough knowledge of the Argentine setting. (Two notable exceptions were Benno Weiser Varon, whose letter appears above, and Robert Weisbrot, whose article in the *New Republic* [June 27, 1981] was far inferior to what I'm sure he was capable of writing.)

The big surprise, however, was the number of people from certifiedly liberal quarters, both here and in Argentina, who came forward to congratulate me. Surely these people, I thought, have no reason to offer aid and comfort to the Argentine anti-Semites and torturers, or even (with all its myriad deficiencies) the present Argentine government. Rather, they felt (and many expressed this point of view to me) that the rhetorical overkill (and convenient omissions) of Timerman and his epigones in the United States were actually doing far more harm than good to the cause both of human rights and the dignity and security of the Jewish community in Argentina. If an example is required, one might refer to the recent book by Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret*. Therein is demonstrated how British atrocity propaganda in World War I, vastly overblown and in many cases downright false, actually delayed acceptance of the awful truth about what was happening in the extermination camps of Eastern Europe some twenty-five years later, when the first stories began to leak out of Nazi-occupied territory.

Now, let me reply to my critics individually.

I DON'T know why my article would have been, as Jordan C. Band says, "more convincing and a great deal less unfair" if I had not addressed myself to the specific exaggerations and falsifications of the American Left (no quotation marks required). Convincing to whom? Unfair to whom? After all, I was not questioning (or minimizing) Tim-

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erman's account of his sufferings—which I freely reported and commented upon—but rather addressing myself to the larger issues involved. This is precisely what Anthony Lewis, Tom Wicker, and others were doing from their own particular perspective.

I COMPLETELY agree with Charles Ansell that Argentina's anti-Semitism (as I suppose that of any nation) is *sui generis*. Nonetheless, even matters *sui generis* cry out for explanation, and one gropes for analogies. My reference to the U.S. of the 1920's was admittedly a crude attempt at sociological description, but I hastened to say so in my article ("Comparisons of this sort are invariably imperfect"). The reference was further qualified by the phrase "in certain ways"—and I went on to explain what these were and were not. One of the things they certainly weren't was the Germany of the Nuremberg laws, which is the position of Timerman and some others.

If Mr. Ansell thinks my discussion of the difference between authoritarianism and totalitarianism constitutes "talmudic pedantry," he needn't take my word for it. He can consult the Greeks, the Spaniards, or the Portuguese, who have actually experienced the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. He might also inquire of the Cubans, the Czechs, the Ukrainians, the Chinese, and, among an unfortunately lengthening list, the Soviet Jews.

OF ALL the letters critical of my article Walter A. Sheldon's is certainly the most thoughtful and relevant, since he speaks from certain knowledge of the German experience. However, I think he misses a couple of points about Argentina. First of all, when I said that the military there were pursuing "in Argentine society as a whole . . . peace and public order," I added, with a bitter parenthesis which he abstains from quoting, "as defined by them, of course." My purpose was to emphasize that—while I thoroughly disagreed with Timerman's characterization both of the regime there and of the very texture of life in the society—I did not think the government very respectful of what the words "peace and public order" mean in democratic countries. Nonetheless, even arrests and detention without trial, press censorship, confiscation of property, and so forth, *particularly in the context of internal war*, need to be separated conceptually from what the Nazis meant by *Gleichschaltung*.

Unlike the Nazis, the Argentine military have no real "ideology" or "doctrine" except a crude anti-Communism; there is no state "party," there is not even a Führer! The educational system continues to be as disorganized and irrelevant as ever; young Argentines are not being incorporated into government-organized or sponsored paramilitary formations dedicated to anti-Semitism (or even anti-Communism). The possibility of a war with Chile, which I take it Mr. Sheldon sees as a possible pretext for a move to a fully totalitarian state, is laughable to most Argentines (though not, I trust, to Chileans, and perhaps not to Americans either).

One point Mr. Sheldon makes about the response of the German Jewish community to the advent of Nazism does, however, inadvertently shed some additional light on matters Argentine. He describes German Jews as basically insouciant about growing Nazi restrictions because most were "in the middle- to upper-economic bracket; they had taken root in Germany over many, many years. . . .They felt they had the right to live in Germany and consider themselves German in every respect." Whatever explanatory power this description may contain about events in Germany, I'm afraid it is helpful with respect to Argentina only by way of contrast.

The Argentine Jewish community is actually weaker and less well-rooted in that country (and therefore at least as potentially vulnerable) as the German Jews. Further, unlike the latter, they can have no doubts—from the incontrovertible evidence of the Holocaust—precisely to what bestial extremes anti-Semitism can go. There is nothing to prevent them from leaving, with all of their goods intact. *Yet most choose to remain.* In the context of the post-Holocaust period, I do not think that this decision can be dismissed quite so cavalierly; it is a silent witness, which along with some particularly emphatic public statements by leaders of the organized Jewish community in Argentina, deserves to be taken seriously.

This does not mean that they might not enjoy a better life elsewhere. Many Argentines, by no means all of them Jews, have opted for emigration over the past twenty years, whether to live in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, or Israel. As long as the nation's economy continues to deteriorate, and its quest for political community is thwarted by extremist ideologies, this is a trend which is bound to continue. As a particularly literate, energetic, and ambitious component of a most able and attractive people, Argentine Jews are bound to be disproportionately represented in this out-migration. Perhaps it is proper and just that this should be so. But those who remain ought to be free of the stigmas which Timerman and others choose to attach to them.

I should add that the experience of Nazism in Germany, so illuminatingly and precisely described in Mr. Sheldon's letter, raises some serious problems of definition. Granted that the Nazi regime was slow to consolidate itself and fully reveal its totalitarian features. Granted that there were still interstices through which Jews could survive—far later, in fact, than the date 1938 which Mr. Sheldon gives. Granted also that in spite of the regime's oft-articulated goal of a Germany "free of Jews" (*Judenfrei*), combined with the characteristic thoroughness and efficiency of that people, there were still loopholes, exceptions, anomalies, and individual kindnesses such as Mr. Sheldon himself recounts. Still, within a mere five years of Hitler's assumption of the chancellorship, the Nuremberg laws had reclassified Germans along "racial" lines and, we can now see, the vast noose which was slowly to close upon the Jewish community was already in place. Most of the characteristic components of Nazism were present in Germany even before March 1933, but remain absent to this day in Argentina.

I would not want to make too much of the fact that the present regime in Argentina has been in power precisely the same number of years that Hitler held office in Germany at the time of the Nuremberg laws. After all, things get done more slowly south of the equator. Nonetheless, the movement these past two or three years in Argentina has been *away* from martial law, disappearances, and other forms of repression. This is not merely my observation on the

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Tal-Aroyo

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basis of a visit in March 1980, but the view promulgated by the human-rights office of the Carter administration in its annual reviews on Argentina.

The German experience does raise some serious problems of another order. Since one particular form of anti-Semitism which began, so to speak, conventionally enough ended in the Holocaust, it is no longer possible to say with complete assurance that the same thing cannot happen again somewhere else. It is necessary at all times to exercise stern vigilance and close and careful observation. It is also necessary to sort out the various manifestations of anti-Semitism worldwide, for if one particular instance led to the Holocaust, by the same token, not *every* manifestation everywhere is bound by some twisted law of history to have precisely the same consequences. As the spiritual leader of the Sephardic community in Argentina remarked on a recent visit to this country, it should not be necessary to assume that we are on the threshold of another Holocaust to be effectively concerned with anti-Semitism in Argentina (or, I might add, anywhere else).

LEONARD A. GORDON seems to have read my article very carelessly, if at all, since he simply ignores all of the distinctions I tried so carefully to draw. Chief among these was that by its very nature counter-guerrilla warfare is an exceedingly nasty business in which many innocent people are caught in the maw along with the guilty. We ought, however, to consider the antecedent conditions which bring about such parlous states, rather than to act—as many Amnesty International members seem wont to do—as if the world were created yesterday. Prior to the military coup in Argentina in 1976, a political assassination in that country was occurring *every four hours.* No political system, no matter how perfect, could endure such an assault on its credibility. Does this mean that once the threat is exorcised, Argentina lives "happily ever after"? No, it does not. But if we wish to avoid such matters in the future, we should recognize their causes early on.

As to the case of Mario Zaraceansky, since he is apparently a political prisoner, it is not surprising that the Argentine government refuses him permission to leave the country. He is not, however, being refused an exit visa because he is a Jew, which is the point to which I referred in my article.

SINCE I have never had the privilege of meeting and talking with Peggy A. Isaak, I really cannot enter into competition with Jacobo Timerman for her attention and credibility. However, she might ask herself why it is that the most important organized expressions of the Jewish community both here and in Argentina would have an interest in denying Timerman's version of events, if in fact it were true.

JOE RAPOPORT overlooks the fact that Timerman did not just chronicle his sufferings as a political prisoner. Had he done nothing more than that, there would have been no reason for my article. Rather, Timerman provoked (and, on a visit to this country at the time of the publication of his book, participated in) an ongoing discussion about "practical politics" and "foreign-affairs strategies." If Timerman has the right to raise these broader issues—and I certainly think he does—others have the right to join in the discussion without being shouted down.

I think, also, that Mr. Rapoport misses the point about my questioning Timerman's commitment to liberal democratic values. Obviously, regardless of his views (or perhaps, his lack of them), nothing justifies the inhumane treatment of his person. Rather, I wished to emphasize something every Argentine knows—that Timerman was deeply implicated in the course of events in his country, and shares the blame for its slide into a military dictatorship. Indeed, in his book he says as much, which in someone else might encourage a certain reticence and humility, rather than some of the poses which he has lately struck.

ALBERTO COFFA is far more thoroughly grounded in Argentina reality than most of my critics, but he vastly distorts both what I said and what I implied. I was not "revealingly silent" (or silent in any other fashion) about disappearances. I am not absolutely certain that the so-called "moderates" in the Argentine military have the upper hand, and therefore did not say so. Nor did I uncritically endorse (much less "cheer") the conduct of Argentine security forces. My purpose was to explain how things happened, since (as Mr. Coffa properly notes) one certainly could draw no accurate picture from what we were being told by commentators in the New York press or even—except through a glass, darkly—from what Timerman had written.

The matter about the Argentine population and its attitude toward the present military government is one which admits of legitimate controversy. But I do not think Mr. Coffa provides a convincing alternative to my own description. The truth is that for more than fifty years Argentines have disagreed, often violently, over the merits of successive regimes, whether military or civilian, and I have no doubt that these controversies continue. Some people are obviously afraid—and have reason to be. These include families of persons who have disappeared, and, inevitably, those whose political views and past (or present) activities place them under the purview of various "anti-subversive" agencies of the military. However, I note a certain confusion in Mr. Coffa's letter. At times he wishes to extend this blanket of fear over the entire population (to excuse it, as it were, for its lack of active opposition to the government). At other times, he lapses into a fatalism common to Argentine intellectuals, suggesting that for some mysterious reason his fellow citizens are invariably destined to live under some form of brutal repression, if not the present "national security state," then a "populist" dispensation. (If this were so, then fascism would become, as Molotov once called it, merely "a matter of taste.") I should emphasize that in describing the Argentine people's response to the military regime, it was not my intention to score moral points against it. Nor do I think, whatever the majority of Argentines may feel, that this either justifies or ameliorates abuses of judicial procedure and human rights.

Mr. Coffa's discussion of disappearances in Argentina is most compelling, and, I am sure, quite accurate as far as it goes. But this is not the whole story. At the time of Perón's return in 1973 the military there was thoroughly discredited politically, and anxious to return to the barracks. Its "rehabilitation" came about slowly, as public order deteriorated, particularly after Perón's death in 1974. However,

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even then the hands of the generals were stayed for nearly two more years—a reluctance inspired not by modesty, we may be sure, but by a desire to gather an overwhelming consensus in favor of their return to power. We cannot doubt that this would never have developed were it not for the subsequently overwhelming wave of terrorist violence.

Now, there *ought* to be a neat middle ground between counter-guerrilla operations and judicial irregularity. In the real world of politics, however, there often is not, particularly in countries like Argentina, where constitutional traditions are so fragile. Once a break is made with civilian government and the rule of law, there is no controlling device for moderating the conduct of the armed forces. And, as in any civil war, old scores are settled under some rather blurred rubrics—"anti-subversion," "anti-Communism," or whatever. The lesson which Argentina teaches is this: that while any civilian government is better than none at all, most people prefer security before all other values. It is the job of responsible citizens to prevent matters from ever reaching the point where people must choose from so limited a range of alternatives. To point this out is not to display "moral blindness" but to exercise political realism of the most elementary type. If Mr. Coffa cannot see this, then the problem, I'm afraid, is not mine but his own.

I WOULD like to thank Benno Varon for his letter, and for his conscientious reporting on the case, which went unnoticed for so long. And finally, I should like to take this opportunity to thank publicly those many persons—from Argentina as well as the United States—who wrote or phoned me personally to express their appreciation for my article.

On Reading

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

So many current essays are so sharp-edgedly polemical that finding one . . . about the wholly impractical subject of the joy of reading and the polarities separating the active from the bookish person is a great delight. . . . Many thanks to Joseph Epstein for "The Noblest Distraction" [August].

WALTER ROSENAUER

Jackson, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In an article of five pages, Joseph Epstein drops a hundred names, which shows what is valued in some university departments of English and, apparently, by COMMENTARY. He tells us early that there can be no generally satisfactory list of recommended books. Then why go on about the subject? Is it so that the tired Anatole France-Marcel Proust anecdote can be trotted out yet again? Why sneer at certain authors, as Mr. Epstein does when suggesting that Santayana may have been removed from a list "to make room for such writers as Erica Jong, Chaim Potok, Kurt Vonnegut, Alvin Toffler, Gore Vidal, Alistair Cooke, and James Clavell"? And what is expected from us when we learn that Mr. Epstein recently acquired *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Agnes Repplier's essays, and Michelet's *Histoire de la Revolution Française*? Are we to swoon with admiration, or with envy, delight, and awe?

The usual mistakes in English creep in. Mr. Epstein writes of "those fornicators and feeders who wish each in their own fashion to devour the world." "Each" requires the singular. "Their" means that the fornicators and feeders all have the same fashion, which is not—so far as Mr. Epstein's prose style permits one to be sure—what he intended. He tells us that "from the age of twenty to seventy-five one can best read something on the order of 5500 books." He should have said "at best" or "at most." His use of "best" makes 5500 the ideal number of books to read, again not what he intended. He calls 5500 "a piddling small number." The meaning of piddling is trivial, paltry. So we have a trivial small number, rather than a trivial large number. He gives us this: ". . . there is no question but that for Ruskin reading ought to play a preponderant part in life." The "but" could have been omitted. It should have been been omitted.

The article is, in any case, nonsense. An example: "The mystery and wonder of it is that somehow or other, the books one needs are the books one finds." What is the evidence for this? How can we know? Finally, Mr. Epstein writes of "the bone knowledge of the bookish, who know that of the reading of books there is no end. . . ." What a revelation!

EDWIN NEWMAN

New York City

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

Dear Ed: Although we have never met, I take the liberty of addressing you as Ed because I feel we are getting to know each other. Over the past few months, you have written three letters to COMMENTARY about me. I feel, Ed, that we are becoming pen pals. How are things with your family? Well, I hope.

I guess every writer dreams of a reader like you, Ed. You know what I mean, someone who will give his work the kind of close attention every writer hopes for. And if such a reader wishes to develop an extended criticism out of a typographical error (I refer to the dropping of "at" in the phrase that should have read "at best . . ."), or make pedantic points while accusing the writer of being pedantic, or be just plain insulting—well, that is part of the game. Wasn't it Stendhal who said that to write is to risk being shot at in public? But there I go dropping those names again, Ed. You'll have to excuse me.

Well, Ed, that's about it for now. I have to return to another essay I'm writing for COMMENTARY at the moment. I am sure I shall hear from you again once it appears. Meanwhile, my best wishes to you and yours for a jolly holiday season.

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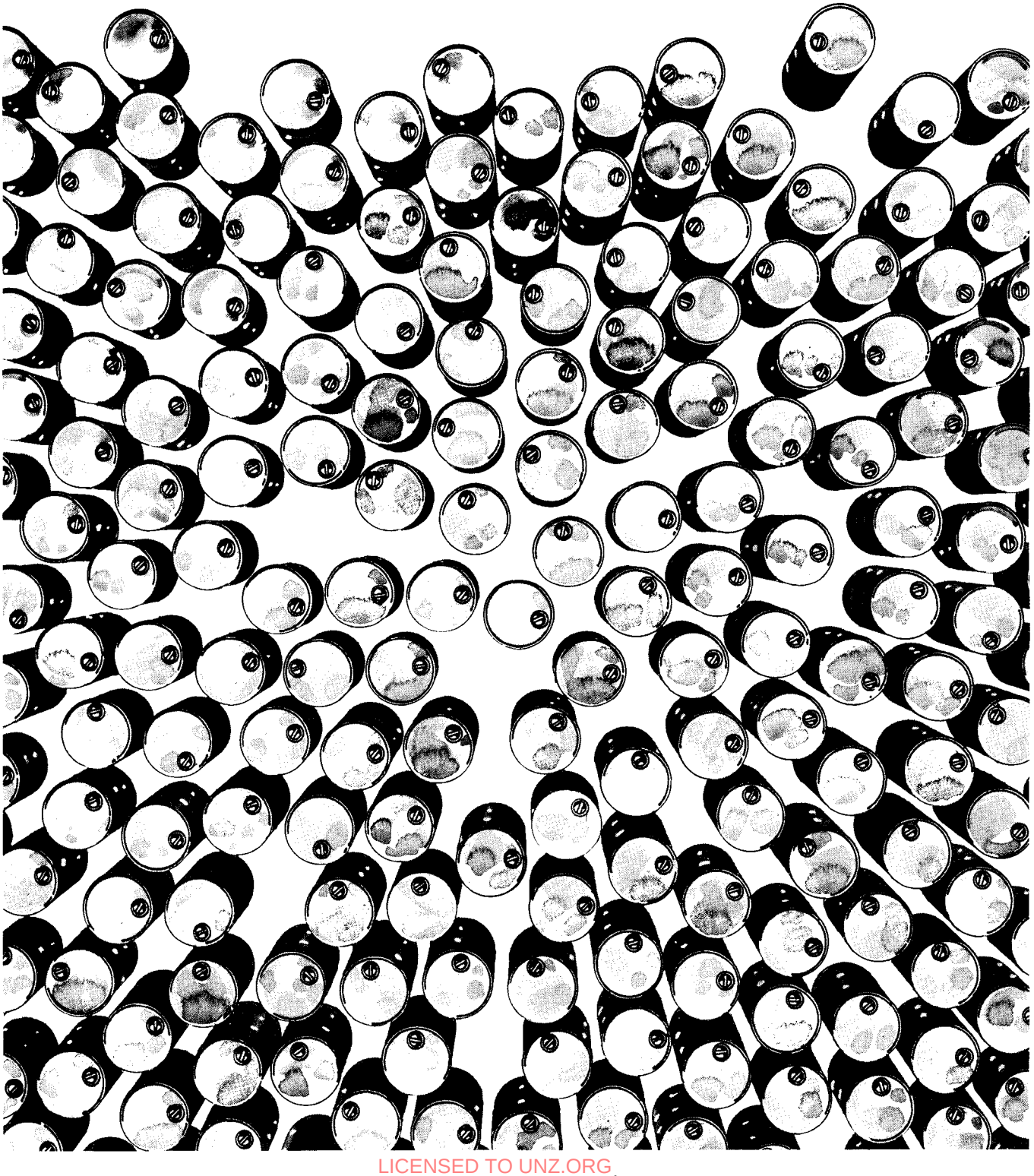

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Appeasement & the AWACS

Robert W. Tucker

SELDOM in recent years has the Congress, particularly the Senate, given the sustained consideration to an issue of foreign policy that it gave to the Saudi arms sale. Yet what is striking about the debate engendered by the sale was the inconsequence of much of it when measured against this nation's compelling interests in the Persian Gulf.

Almost throughout the debate the focus remained on issues of secondary significance. This was no accident. In presenting their case for the arms sale, administration officials were evidently intent on structuring a dialogue that avoided as much as possible the critical issues of policy. And not without reason, since these issues would have raised difficult and embarrassing questions.

Since the administration had no desire to engage in serious give and take over the deeper implications of the arms sale, its emphasis from the outset was on the relationship between the arms sale and Israel's security. On this chosen ground, the battle was bound to be won in the end. For the President could always promise, as he repeatedly did, that Israel would continue to enjoy qualitative superiority in arms over the Arab states. No matter that in the process of retaining such superiority Israel would either sink financially or become even more dependent than today on the United States. What mattered was that Reagan had given his word and that to question his promise was to impugn the integrity of a very popular President.

Nor was the Begin government ever disposed to a serious test of strength with the Reagan administration over the arms sale. Indeed, during his September visit to this country, the Israeli Prime Minister not only was uncharacteristically moderate in his opposition to the impending arms sale but indicated that he considered the "new" strategic relationship promised Israel to be much more important than either the proposed sale or, it seemed, the policy underlying it.

Nevertheless, the Reagan administration insisted on focusing attention on the efforts of Jerusalem to block the sale. The Israeli Prime Minister was depicted as being at his most intransigent. The President warned against the danger of a foreign country dictating U.S. foreign policy. With the administration's evident approval, the Saudis' chief lobbyist in Washington, Fred Dutton, characterized the struggle over the arms sale as one between Begin and Reagan. Richard Nixon echoed the characterization.

Contrary to a widespread impression, this focus on Israel was at least as much a matter of choice as of necessity. The administration was not unhappy to have the debate framed largely in terms of the threat allegedly held out by the arms to Israel's security. Nor was it unhappy to see the debate centered on the issue of preserving the integrity of the policy-making process against the efforts of Israel and its American supporters to compromise this integrity. The administration calculated that if the debate could be kept largely on these grounds the sale would ultimately be approved by the Senate.

At the same time, it must be noted that if this calculation proved sound, it was in part because most opponents of the arms package acquiesced in the tactic of avoiding the real issues it raised. Diverse as it was in its reasons for fighting the sale, the opposition gave little indication that it had much more desire than the administration to confront these issues. Most of the opponents remained quite as reluctant as the administration to support a basic shift of policy in the Gulf. This being so, the reasons for opposing the sale were confined, on the whole, either to the threat held out to Israel's security or to the danger that the arms might one day fall into hostile hands.

These reasons were surely significant. When taken together they did form serious and substantial grounds for opposing a policy of supplying Saudi Arabia with the most advanced weapons systems we have. Still, taken by themselves, they did not go to the heart of the matter. For they did not directly address the central issues of policy the Saudi arms package ought to have raised.

AT THIS late date, there can scarcely be any uncertainty over the interest that must subordinate all other considerations in

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the formulation and implementation of American policy in the Middle East. To insure Western access to the oil of the Gulf remains no less today than in the recent past our paramount concern. Assured access—which must be defined not only in physical terms but ultimately in terms of acceptable levels of production and price as well—is the yardstick against which virtually any and every policy move must be measured and judged. This vital interest, on the preservation of which the American global position directly depends, provides the one true litmus test of policy.

The Saudi arms sale should have been judged primarily in terms of this interest. If the sale would further this interest, there was no sufficient reason to oppose it—and this despite other unfortunate, even deplorable, effects it might have. It does, after all, sometimes happen that certain national interests may have to be sacrificed or at least compromised for the sake of yet other interests. In the present case, it might have been argued that although the arms intended for Saudi Arabia represented an added threat to Israel's security, the liability thus created for an ally was more than balanced by the benefit resulting to America's vital interest in the Gulf. This was in fact the core of the administration's case, though it never had the candor and the courage to admit it. Instead, the argument was advanced that arming a committed foe of Israel with the most advanced weapons systems represented no significant additional threat to Israel—indeed, that it was even good for Israel. In this form, the argument was merely disingenuous.

To say this, however, is not necessarily to condemn the administration's determination to push through the sale. It is only to condemn it for lack of candor, a venial sin in politics. If the arms package does indeed significantly further the American interest in preserving access to the oil of the Gulf, then it should be supported despite the adverse effects it may have on Israel's security. It is a hard world. Painful choices must sometimes be made. The question is whether this was such an occasion.

IN MAKING its case for the sale, the administration began by explaining why it was asking Congress to approve an arms package in 1981 that its predecessors had promised not to undertake in 1978. On this earlier date the Carter administration had assured the Congress that it would not go beyond the sale of F-15 jets to Saudi Arabia. Having begun to betray that promise almost as soon as it had been made, the Carter administration nourished expectations in Riyadh. Still, on this score at least, the new Reagan administration manifested no disapproval of the handiwork of its predecessors. On the contrary, it soon showed that it was more than eager not only to satisfy earlier Saudi expectations but to create some of its own.

The defense for giving the Saudis in 1981 what Congress had been promised in 1978 would be denied them was disarmingly simple. Circumstances had changed in the intervening years. This was the principal justification for permitting Riyadh to buy the F-15 add-ons, the aerial tankers, the Sidewinder and Harpoon missiles, and of course the AWACS. The revolution in Iran, the Soviet attack on Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, and all of the experienced as well as the feared consequences of these events were invoked in defense of the sale.

To this broad ground the administration added the following propositions which, given their constant reiteration, soon took on an almost ritualistic quality. The sale would help the Saudis defend themselves, particularly from regional threats. It would lay the groundwork for greater U.S.-Saudi defense cooperation. In this regard, the sale would enhance the effectiveness of our own military capabilities to employ U.S. forces in the Gulf. The AWACS would provide us with an early-warning network. Also, by providing an extensive logistic base and support infrastructure, we would lay the basis for facilitating deployment of U.S. air forces to the region in time of need, if so requested. Finally, the sale would not only highlight our commitment to Saudi security and provide a foundation for greater U.S.-Saudi cooperation, but would contribute to restoring the image of U.S. power and the value of our friendship in the area. This in turn would offer the best guarantee against Soviet threats to the region and against radical efforts to undermine the peace process.

Such was the administration's formal case for the arms sale. But it had a less formal and rather more revealing case as well which, though never quite explicitly stated, was made clear enough over time. The Saudis, the informal argument ran, are now the linchpin of American policy in the region of the Gulf; even more, there is now no real alternative to them. This being so, we must keep them satisfied at almost all costs. Within very considerable latitude, they must be given what they want and feel they must have.

These propositions do not exhaust the informal case. Taken by themselves they are plainly vulnerable to the charges that the Saudi regime cannot defend itself against the varied threats to its existence, that the stability of the regime cannot be relied on, and that even if it does somehow manage to continue in power it will not necessarily define its interests in a manner compatible with our own. Against these charges the informal case asserts: that Saudi Arabia will be able to defend itself against most external threats provided the regime receives sufficient American arms along with *some* direct American support and assistance; that the present regime is basically stable and can be expected to survive for the indefinite future; and that Riyadh is basically friendly to the U.S. and, accordingly, defines its interests in a manner essentially compatible with

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American interests (not only in the immediate region of the Gulf but also in the greater region of the Middle East as well).

Finally, the administration's informal case rested on the consequences of rejecting the sale. In the end, it was these—ever more ominous as the debate went on—that came to represent the hard core and most effective part of the case for supporting the arms package. There were, first of all, the regional consequences of rejection. A rejection would humiliate the Saudi regime and gravely jeopardize its standing in the Arab world. The result could only serve to damage our interests in the Gulf. At best, the Saudis might be expected to turn to Western Europe for arms and protection. Alternatively, they were seen embracing their radical Arab brothers ("engaging in regional politics," as the State Department bureaucracy euphemistically put the matter). At worst, they might seek a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Looming over these frightening prospects was the threat that a disappointed Saudi Arabia would resort to the oil weapon. In the wake of a refusal to sell them the weapons they wanted, they might raise prices while decreasing their production and thus tightening the oil market.

But even these anticipated grave consequences of rejecting the arms package were said to be overshadowed by a yet greater danger. Congressional refusal to sanction the sale would place in serious question the authority and effectiveness of the President in foreign policy. It would send the message that, on critical decisions dealing with the Middle East, even an otherwise strong administration could be prevented from acting in the nation's interests by our Zionist client—and its supporters in this country. The result would not only be to challenge the President's control of foreign policy but to question the very integrity of the foreign-policy process.

THE first thing that must be said about the administration's case is that it lays bare as never before the central importance of Saudi Arabia today for America's Middle East policy. If there was any doubt before September about the significance Washington attaches to its relationship with Riyadh, there can be none today. By word and by deed the Reagan administration has now shown what only yesterday it was at considerable pains to deny—that it has made Saudi Arabia the centerpiece of its policy in the Persian Gulf and, beyond, in the Middle East.

That Saudi Arabia should be the focus of American concern is, in itself, scarcely surprising. Access to the oil of the Gulf is for all practical purposes today synonymous with access to Saudi oil. It is not the singular concentration as such on Riyadh that must occasion attention but the extent to which this nation's policy is now held in thralldom to Saudi Arabia. The Saudis had made the arms package a "litmus test" of our intentions. This being the case, there was no alternative but to go forward with the sale. The Saudis had indicated that they would entertain no modifications of the terms on which the sale was made. This being the case, the administration found fighting with constituencies at home preferable to undertaking further negotiation with the recipients of the arms. The Saudis had insisted that they would enter into no public commitments restricting the uses to which the arms could be put. This being the case, the Reagan administration was forced to give assurances to Congress that Riyadh would not deign to give to the United States.

The effect of all this was to convey the impression that the party holding much the stronger position was not the seller of the arms but the buyer. Certainly, in proclaiming that the heavens would fall if the arms sale were not approved, the administration almost seemed determined on going out of its way to confirm this impression.

Have we now been exposed, then, to the real meaning of the much touted "strategic consensus" of Secretary of State Alexander Haig? It would seem so. When critically examined in the light of these recent events the strategic consensus turns out to be little more than the packaging given to a one-pillar policy in the Middle East. With the Iranian pillar gone and the Egyptian pillar now rather shaky, we have been reduced to the last and, by almost any reckoning, the weakest pillar of all. Once the administration's case for the arms sale is seen in this light, its otherwise baffling arguments and claims become understandable.

Yet they do not thereby become more acceptable. Indeed, the administration's case takes on a semblance of plausibility only if the assumption is granted that we have no real freedom of strategic initiative or, what amounts to the same, no independent and effective power to dispose of in the region of the Gulf. If this were so, we would have no alternative but to place our reliance on the Saudi connection and to accede to Saudi wishes, however reasonable or unreasonable they might be. Although the administration will not directly own up to it, that assumption comes very close to defining its own innermost conviction. In subscribing to it, the administration has preserved the continuity of American policy. Today as yesterday, a policy essentially passive in the use of American power must be expected to rely on whatever surrogate it can, and to find in this surrogate qualities that give such reliance at least a semblance of plausibility.

Even if this policy of impotence continues to hold sway, however, there is still no excuse for the persisting illusions about its all too likely results. Although the Shah's Iran ultimately came to grief, we can only look back with longing when we compare it with our chosen surrogate of today. Whereas in the case of Iran there was something on which for a time we could rely, in the

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case of Saudi Arabia there is virtually nothing to sustain us.

A proverbial house of cards, vulnerable to a dozen different kinds of serious threats, Riyadh disposes of little save a financial power that, despite the awe it inspires in many quarters in the West, cannot be expected to sustain the Saudi regime against the first serious external or internal challenge. The prospects for internal upheaval in the several years ahead must be counted as quite strong, if the preponderance of experts on the Gulf is to be believed.

Understandably, the administration prefers to believe that the Saudi regime possesses a formula denied to others for immunizing itself against the forces of change sweeping over the Arab world and that have already brought about the downfall of the Shah and the assassination of Sadat. American policy has bet very nearly its all on the continuity of the present government in Riyadh. Should that government be overthrown, the advantages presumably served by the arms sale would be transformed overnight into serious liabilities. Given the policy to which it is now so firmly committed, the administration has no alternative but to believe that Saudi Arabia will be an island of stability in the years to come.

Let us suppose that, despite the mounting signs to the contrary, this belief—or hope—is not dashed. Would this vindicate the administration's case for the arms sale as well as the general policy underlying the sale? The answer evidently depends on whether the Saudi regime can be counted on to use the weapons only in ways and for purposes that we approve. But the entire debate over the arms sale demonstrated, if it demonstrated anything, that we have no reliable way of insuring the uses to which the arms will eventually be put. The administration could give no solid assurance, else it would have done so. The assurances it did finally give were entirely of its own devising. As such, they scarcely bound the Saudis who remained supremely detached from and disdainful of the exercise. Even if they did bind Riyadh, they would remain virtually worthless in view of their vague and obscure character. The haphazard product of a handful of amateur drafters who found in them the rationalization for finally supporting the arms sale, those assurances resemble, in the words of one critic, a bowl of mush. Perhaps the metaphor of goulash is more apt, since one can find in them what one wants to find.

In the last analysis, it is not the assurances Reagan gave to wavering Senators that will prove important. It is whether he and his associates can be counted on effectively to constrain and discipline the Saudis in using the weapons the administration has sold them. If there had not been pervasive doubt over the administration's intention and capability of doing so, there would have been no need to exact detailed assurances. The doubt so widely entertained is eloquent testimony to the way the Saudi-American relationship is perceived today even by those who, in the end, supported the arms sale. Clearly, that relationship is not perceived as one in which Washington holds the upper hand. Among the many lessons the debate conveyed was that we now see our relationship with the Saudis as a relationship between equals.

It may be argued that there was no need to exact any assurances from Riyadh, given the Saudis' record. In the course of the debate, administration spokesmen made much of Saudi moderation and cooperativeness. Approval of the arms sale would presumably insure that these characteristics of Saudi policy would continue to prevail, whereas disapproval would risk a change. When the Saudis were not held out as our friends, they were at least seen as sharing a congruence of interests with us. Again, refusal of the arms would imperil the friendship and create serious conflicts of interest between the two countries.

In terms of substance, these arguments will not bear critical scrutiny. In the great price rises of the 1970's, the Saudis were in the vanguard. Since 1977, they have consistently opposed the peace process. They have created what obstacles they could to our search for bases in the Gulf. In yet other ways, they have opposed us. Why, then, the continued insistence on their moderation and cooperativeness? Is it merely a wishful fantasy or does it reflect a deep fear of what they are capable of doing to our interests if once so disposed?

Certainly, fear must provide a major motivation for a description of Saudi policy that bears almost no correspondence to reality. This is supported by the lurid estimates of disaster if once the Saudis are disappointed or their will is crossed. Thus the absurdly benign picture drawn of Saudi behavior is but the mirror image of the fears we entertain of our powerful friend. After a decade in which the Saudis have filled us with terror over what they might do to us if we do not accede to their wishes, we no longer even seem to be aware of the syndrome into which we have settled.

In the arms-sale debate, administration officials invoked the many and terrible prospects awaiting us on the morrow of rejecting the arms for Riyadh, and the opposition, by its silence, indicated that it too was mindful of these prospects. Whereas, according to the administration, all manner of options were open to the Saudis in the event we disappointed them, virtually no choices were open to us. The Saudis might well go elsewhere—to the Western European states, to their radical Arab brothers, even perhaps to the Soviet Union—but where could we go to compensate for the terrible setback we would experience in the Gulf? The message could not have been clearer, and it tells us a great deal about the way in which Washington now conceives of the Saudi-American relationship.

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PERHAPS the most extraordinary thing about the debate was the willingness of the administration to make the sale so critical a test of its foreign policy. To a detached observer, at issue was whether or not the government of the world's premier state would sell certain arms to a small and weak desert kingdom that happens to possess the world's largest proven reserves of petroleum. Not all arms by any means, only certain arms. One would have thought this a matter the century's greatest power could take in stride, whatever the particular outcome. Instead, we were led to believe that Senate refusal to sanction the sale could only have disastrous consequences. Why this insistence upon calamity if the administration did not have its way?

It is not enough to respond by declaring, as the administration did with such ultimately dramatic effect, that the President's authority and effectiveness in foreign policy were at stake in the outcome. In some measure, they were in the end. But if they were, it was largely because the administration was willing—even intent—on making this so. The question persists: why was it so willing? Why did it finally insist on structuring the case in this apocalyptic manner? Was the bleak picture painted of defeat little more than a last-ditch expedient to compensate both for the obvious mismanagement of the arms sale before Congress and for a case so intrinsically weak and unpersuasive that only a special presidential appeal and desperate tactics could carry it? Or did the insistence that the world would very nearly stand or fall on the outcome of the Senate vote express the true sentiments of this administration?

No doubt, a part of the answer must be found in each of these conjectures. The administration did badly mismanage the arms sale only to find out very late the difficult position it was in. Still, the tactics it employed to overcome its disadvantage surely carried their own risk. Had the Senate turned back the sale, the effect of these tactics would have been to extend the damage done to the administration's Middle East policy. Even employed in behalf of a successful test of strength, they were not without risk, since they emphasized the lack of appeal the arms sale and the arguments urged on its behalf had for Congress (and, beyond the legislature, to the public as well).

If the President and his principal advisers were nevertheless willing to employ the chief executive's ultimate means of persuasion, this can only be explained by their conviction that they were playing for crucial stakes. The arms sale had without doubt become the administration's great test in foreign policy, though not primarily for the reasons the administration's brief would have us believe. It is not because the sale lays a reliable groundwork for greater U.S.-Saudi defense cooperation, or because it significantly enhances our own military capabilities to deploy forces in the Gulf, or yet because it contributes to the restoration of American power and credibility in the Gulf that the AWACS came to represent a do-or-die effort for the administration. Each of these alleged benefits remains unsubstantiated. Indeed, it was precisely because the arguments put forth to support them were so transparently thin—and, on occasion, even absurd—that the administration had to resort to its frantic last-minute appeal. In both the open and executive sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, administration officials were asked time and again if there were additional and compelling reasons for the sale of which the Congress was not aware. In no instance did the administration respond to this question. Its declared position, we can only conclude, was its true position.

The stakes that hung in the balance in the arms sale were, then, surely crucial to the administration, but they were not the stakes the administration would have us believe. We are presently engaged, as we have been for some time, in a policy of economic and political appeasement of Saudi Arabia. A rejection of the arms package threatened that policy. It did so, moreover, at a time when the leverage Riyadh exercises over Washington has never appeared greater. It has never appeared greater if only for the reason that the Reagan administration seems more responsive than were its predecessors to what some have facetiously termed the "balance of payments" between the two countries. The arms sale is a significant part, though only a part, of that balance. Upon its passage depended the prospects of continuing, and much larger, arms sales. And beyond the sale of arms there are the enormous contracts of American firms in Saudi Arabia. Finally, there is the financial succor the Saudis may give us in the form of investment in treasury securities.

Even if we put aside the control Riyadh exercises over the price of oil, the other economic interests at stake in the Saudi connection are therefore seen to be very considerable. Persuaded as it undoubtedly is that these various interests constitute in their totality an important national interest, the administration can accede to Saudi demands with a good conscience. After all, it is facilitating the return of a part of what Saudi Arabia has extracted from us. This is merely good business.

Unfortunately, the leverage in this business is exercised largely by one side. It is the Saudi government that considers itself at liberty to go where it pleases to spend its oil largesse. Washington's position is quite different. Anxious to persuade the Saudis to "buy American," it is constrained to secure economic favors with political concessions. The resulting pattern is one of appeasement, whatever the state of conscience of its practitioners.

Appeasement is nearly always marked by self-deception. To believe that it is undertaken for reasons other than fear and a sense of impotence is part of its pathology. For the appeaser, the will

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to believe is substituted for the will to act. Thus the illusions generated by appeasement will persist in the face of a reality that by any normal reckoning ought to dispel them. For almost a decade we have seen this curious process at work in the Western response to challenge in the Middle East. In the administration's case for the Saudi arms sale we see but the latest manifestation of this need to take refuge in illusions that Middle East realities are likely to dash as cruelly as they have dashed the illusions of the past decade.

OF THESE illusions, none is more persistent and pervasive than the belief that there is some way by which we may secure our interests in the Persian Gulf while avoiding the visible and substantial assertion of American power in the region. This is, in fact, the grand illusion from which nearly all others may be derived. It is at the root of Secretary Haig's "strategic consensus," that appealing incantation which is supposed to deliver us from the various evils threatening our interest in the Gulf. It accounts for the administration's tortured case in defense of the arms sale. Above all, it explains the insistence upon finding in a resolution of the Palestinian problem the means of our salvation from present peril.

At the outset of the Reagan administration, there were intimations that at least the latter persuasion had fallen into disfavor and that the recognition had taken hold that a solution to our problems in the Gulf had to be found in the Gulf. These early signs have all but disappeared today. If anything, the signs multiply that this administration is fast becoming quite as persuaded as was its predecessor that there is an intimate link between "progress" on the Palestinian issue and the improvement of our position in the Gulf.

Indeed, the day may soon come when the present administration will outdo even its predecessors in drawing an altogether familiar equation. For a policy that has now placed very nearly all its bets on Saudi Arabia, there is little alternative but to respond to Riyadh's promptings on the urgency of settling the Palestinian problem. Whether or not these promptings are sincere does not really matter. What does matter is that given the Saudi regime's sense of vulnerability with respect to its radical Arab brothers, Riyadh must be seen as championing the Palestinian cause. In turn, Washington must follow in the Saudi train. The result is that the strategic consensus of Secretary Haig is becoming the instrument of and justification for growing pressures on Israel and a growing American readiness to deal with the PLO.

There is no apparent reason to expect that the present Middle East policy of the Reagan administration will succeed. Even if it does manage to wring concessions from Israel on the Palestinian issue, it is vain to believe that this will significantly improve the American position in the Gulf. Far from doing so, the result may instead be to weaken this position further. For the Saudis, and others, will appreciate the reasons for the turnabout in policy. Rather than restoring American power and credibility, the shift may only strengthen the impression that we are an unreliable ally.

IN SUM, the great dilemma of American policy in the Gulf cannot be resolved by clever schemes. The administration's position in the arms-sale debate indicates that this lesson is still far from being learned. It believes, or appears to believe, that there is a third way—a middle way—to secure our interests in the Gulf and that we can, in time, sneak in a military presence that will be largely subsidized by the Saudis. But this too will almost certainly prove a vain belief. There is no reliable middle way. In the present context, our options have been reduced to a stark two. We may term them the Saudi option and the American option.

The Saudi option is, in essence, no more than the policy of the past decade: the reliance on a surrogate to protect our interests, in the hope that it can and will do so. The policy has already led to disaster in the case of Iran. Considering the strengths and weaknesses of our present surrogate, it may be expected to lead to disaster again.

The American option rests upon the realization that the only reliable way of assuring access to the oil of the Gulf is through a substantial military presence there of our own. Ideally, the presence —aerial and ground—should be in Saudi Arabia itself. Indeed, much military opinion has it that this is not an ideal counsel but the necessary prescription if the security of Saudi oil fields and installations is to be assured. Against this necessity, we are constantly reminded that Riyadh will not and cannot grant American bases. At the same time, it is generally conceded today, in contrast to yesterday, that neither can we stand by in the event Saudi Arabia is attacked by an external force or is threatened by internal upheaval. The declarations of two Presidents now commit this nation to meeting these contingencies. Yet there appears to be no reliable way of meeting them, given the circumstances.

Clearly, the Saudi government will not grant American bases of its own free will. Whether it might do so in response to serious pressures from Washington is not clear, since no such pressures have ever been tried. One must despair that they ever will be applied by an America that becomes ever more accustomed to playing the role of supplicant to the rulers of Arabia.

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Can El Salvador Be Saved?

Max Singer

IN COUNTRIES where the mass of people have been exploited and oppressed for generations, and have no possibility of peacefully securing their freedom or decent treatment, violent revolution often seems to be the only way to produce the necessary change. Many Americans believe that under such circumstances revolution is required, or justifiable, or at the least understandable—and in any case may be inevitable.

Yet anyone with a decent respect for the lessons of human experience must also recognize that revolutions can be violent and painful. Where the regime collapses easily, as in Cuba in 1959, the scars of battle may be only slight. But it is just as likely that the human costs will be immense, and their limits are impossible to predict. In Lebanon 80,000 people (out of a population of three million) died in a year and a half of civil war. In El Salvador, with a population of less than five million, already over 20,000 have died since January 1980. And the number of dead is only one measure of the human tragedy, which often echoes for generations.

The conclusion many people will draw from these considerations is that violent revolution can be justified only with the greatest reluctance, in dire circumstances, after peaceful efforts have been exhausted and no reasonable alternative is available. The argument then centers on how these criteria are to be applied in particular cases.

In September 1979, the case for violent revolution in El Salvador seemed strong. A small number of families had ruled the country for generations, amassed great wealth, and kept most of the people in abject poverty. The army suppressed dissent with bloody force. Less than fifty years ago, 10,000 peasants were slaughtered in a few days for trying to bring about change. Elections did not work; the winner of the 1972 election, Napoleón Duarte, had not been allowed to take power but had been tortured and forced into exile.

Then, suddenly, on October 15, 1979, the revolution came. It came from a surprising source, the middle levels of the officer corps of the army, led by Colonels Garcia, Gutierrez, Majano, and a few others. They deposed the ruling class. They threw out many officers, who had run the army to serve the former ruling class. And they formed a civilian government with a wide spectrum of political representatives including Guillermo Ungo, head of the 600-man Social Democratic party, and several Communists. Their platform was land reform, nationalization of the banks (so that the new small landowners could get the necessary credit), and political democracy. They committed themselves to a new constitution, to be written by a freely elected convention.

Although it had the form of a coup, this was a real revolution: it represented the coming to power of a new class with sharply different policies. But it was a moderate and almost bloodless revolution. The revolutionaries did not begin to set up a totalitarian apparatus or to organize and indoctrinate youth. They did not proclaim themselves part of a world revolutionary movement to fight oppressors or imperialists everywhere. They did not try to destroy or capture the social structure of the society, the church, the workers and peasants, or the unions. They did not conduct a bloody program of retribution for past crimes. But they did commit themselves to a distinct new policy of reform and they did completely exclude from power the great bulk of the former ruling class—the so-called "14 families."

What happened in the six months following this quick and successful moderate revolution, as the new government—the civilian part of which was led after January 1980 by Napoleón Duarte, head of the Christian Democratic party—enacted and began to implement the land reform and bank-nationalization program?

The old ruling class lacked the ability to fight back on a large scale. Instead it went into exile, mostly in Miami, and from there organized death squads and assassination teams to kill Christian Democrats, union leaders, businessmen, and others supporting the government and implementing land reform. It also tried unsuccessfully to organize military coups against the revolutionary government; three such attempts failed.

At the same time, representatives of a number of groups met in Havana, and with Castro's help agreed on a unified military organization to fight the revolutionary government—from the Left. To

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implement their program they arranged for a flow of weapons and supplies into El Salvador from or through or with the help of Cuba, Nicaragua, the PLO, Algeria, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Libya, North Korea, and Mexico. They also arranged for thousands of young Salvadorans to be smuggled out of the country for military training and indoctrination in Nicaragua, Cuba, and other countries; when these young people returned home, they engaged in sabotage and murder. Finally, they started broad political and propaganda activities to gain international support. Cuba was able to secure Mexico's help in many ways. For example, Mexico promised Cuba that it would carry out large-scale military maneuvers near Guatemala in January 1981, so that the Guatemalan army would be unable to intervene to help save the new El Salvador government from the guerrillas' "final offensive" (which, however, failed for several reasons, including lack of popular support).

Thus for the last two years El Salvador has been torn apart by two counterrevolutions, or phony revolutions, trying to gain power and reverse the actions of the revolutionary group that has ruled since October 1979: one counterrevolution from the extreme Right, made up of the former ruling class, and one from the extreme Left, controlled and led by violent fanatics with the support of most of the enemies of the U.S. from all over the world. Both counterrevolutions receive some support from less extreme and even centrist individuals and groups.

The extreme Left has organized a political front, the FDR, which includes such democratic forces as the Social Democratic party led by Guillermo Ungo (who broke with the Duarte government), a small splinter group of the Christian Democrats, and a number of others; the FDR reports to a single military command known as the FMLN/DRU. The Left has also been able to get political and financial help from some democratic and church groups around the world (including help in smuggling guns).

As for the extreme Right, it has sympathizers within the revolutionary government's armed forces, especially the Treasury Police and the National Guard. It also has foreign support, in Guatemala and even in the U.S., and perhaps elsewhere, from individuals and groups opposed to land reform and other aspects of the economic program. Because the extreme Right believes it necessary to use more bloody repression against those suspected of helping or sympathizing with the Left insurrection, it gains most whenever it seems that the revolutionary government and its external allies are not succeeding in defeating that insurrection.

The extreme Right bases its case against the government on two arguments. One concerns economic policy—land reform, nationalization, and other economic reforms, which the Right considers to be destroying the country's economy. Many Americans might well share some of this disagreement with the government's economics. But are these disagreements great enough to justify murderous attacks on the government, without first trying peaceful means to change the policies? Obviously not.

The second argument of the extreme Right is that only it, with the bloody measures it advocates, can successfully defeat the effort of the extreme Left to impose totalitarian oppression on the people of El Salvador. Here again one can agree that a victory of the extreme Left would indeed bring horrible results but still have ample grounds to believe that the present revolutionary government, which is preferred over the insurrectionary groups by the Church, the peasants' and workers' unions, the business community, and other centrists, is better able to defeat the FMLN/DRU than the extreme Right would be.

WHAT is the justification of the extreme Left for a violent counterrevolution? It argues that throwing out right-wing officers and the old ruling class has not brought about a real change in El Salvador because the army is still in power. It claims that the civilian government is a sham because it cannot control elements of the security forces committing atrocities against the people. It says that the economic reforms do not go far enough; most of the peasants ostensibly given ownership of the land have not yet received their formal title documents, and are subject to pressure by the former landowners who may be helped by local police or militia. It charges that the elections scheduled for next year will not be fair, or that the army will not allow the winners to take power in any case. It asserts that *it* represents the real will of the people; the fact that the people have failed to respond to repeated calls for general strikes and for other shows of support for the Left only means they have been coerced and are afraid to express their opinions.

It is difficult for an outsider to judge these claims completely. Some of them, if true, would possibly be substantial enough to justify violent action. But they fail absolutely and utterly because the violent counterrevolution of the Left began before the revolution was three months old. No one can justify starting a brutal and destructive war, resulting in thousands and thousands of deaths, and increasing the possibility of an eventual victory by the extreme Right, on the suspicion of what the revolutionary junta might do despite its promises. A minimum respect for human life would have given the new revolutionary government at least six months to see whether it could deliver on its promises of reform and democracy.

The extreme Left is correct that supporters of the government have committed atrocities, although probably fewer than the government's two enemies on the extreme Left and the extreme Right. But the government's supporters would not be committing atrocities if there were no violent

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insurrection against the government. If the extreme Left counterrevolution cannot be justified by substantial grievances, or by a failure to gain redress through peaceful means and/or popular support, then it too bears responsibility for the reaction to its violent attack on the government—even that part of the reaction that is illegal and unjustified. (This principle is illustrated in the common-law rule that even an unarmed burglar is guilty of murder if the owner of the house he is stealing from accidentally and illegally kills an innocent bystander in responding to the burglary.) The Left's moral responsibility for the government's atrocities is made even stronger by the fact that a major part of the counterrevolutionary strategy is to tempt or *force* the government to commit atrocities.

The counterrevolution from the extreme Left also bears a good deal of the responsibility for the atrocities committed by its counterparts on the far Right. If there were no violent insurrection by the FMLN/DRU, the revolutionary government would have less trouble suppressing the violent Right. The main reason the government is not able to deal more effectively with the latter is that it is also under attack by the FMLN/DRU; this reduces its resources and renders it less free to take action against people and groups whose help it may need in the fight against the FMLN/DRU.

Determining what "the people" think or want in a foreign country torn by violence is very difficult, conceptually as well as factually. Undoubtedly most of the people want, most of all, peace. Undoubtedly, too, many are deeply skeptical of promises of reform, free elections, a new and different army. But it does seem clear that a major shift of opinion in favor of the revolutionary government took place when it gave 160,000 peasant families ownership of the land they had been tilling, and took all the 250 large estates away from their former owners. It is likely that the families and friends of victims of atrocities by government supporters have in many cases been turned against the government. Still, many in El Salvador understand that the real responsibility lies with the group that—without reasonable cause—has plunged the country into counterrevolutionary war, and that the best hope for peace is to turn a united face against it.

On September 15, 1981, Archbishop Rivera y Damas said explicitly that only a small percent of the people of El Salvador support the FMLN/DRU. Virtually all of the local Church hierarchy and parish priests reject the counterrevolution. (The enthusiasm of some parish priests and even of some bishops for "liberation theology" would not seem to extend to the "liberators" of the FMLN/DRU.) Even most of the radical priests want to give the current revolutionary government a chance to complete its programs and deliver on its promises. The other mass organization, the peasants' union, rejects the insurrection of the extreme Left, as do most of the free labor unions and almost all of the political, social, and business organizations of the country.

Three times the FMLN/DRU called for a general strike without a substantial response, although there is reason to believe that the people of El Salvador can make their opinions known when they truly oppose a government. Before the colonels' revolution, for instance, crowds of over 100,000 Salvadorans marched to protest against their government. But after the land reform of March-April all attempts by the extreme Left to organize a demonstration failed. This fall 100,000 Salvadorans filled the stadium to support the government.

Thus we can say with some firmness—although perhaps preserving a bit of uncertainty about the real division of opinion within the mass of the people*—that in El Salvador a relatively popular, moderate revolution is under violent attack by two small groups, one on the Left and one on the Right, neither of which has any substantial claim to sympathy or support. Both, in effect, are ideological gangster groups, destroying the peace of the country by virtue of their ability to kill people and wreck property, without just cause or popular support. El Salvador is not deeply divided; it is under assault by small, violent, and vicious extremist fringes.

II

WHY is there so much international support for the FMLN/DRU if it is really just a group of ideological gangsters? First, there are those nations—Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Vietnam, Libya, and Ethiopia—that will support any enemy of the U.S. Every one of these countries is "Not Free," according to the long-term system of ratings contained in Freedom House's *Survey of Freedom*. Every one of them endorsed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. On the other hand, every free country in Latin America (Costa Rica Jamaica, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador) supports the revolutionary government to some degree.

The more difficult case is Mexico (rated as

* In assessing the state of political opinion within El Salvador, two special circumstances should be kept in mind. First, it is still relatively dangerous to speak out because both the extreme Left and the extreme Right routinely inflict violent retribution on people who speak in ways they do not like. Second, because of the long history of political violence and brutality on both sides, the idea that there may be a real political Center in the country is very hard for many people to accept. For a *campesino*, say, and a colonel to realize that they are on the same side requires overcoming a mountain of habit and suspicion. Still, it is possible to summarize the state of political opinion in El Salvador thus: although many feel that, until the planned free elections are carried out, the government is not a legitimate one, and many see President Duarte as a partisan leader rather than as a true national figure representing the whole Center, the great majority nevertheless support the junta against its enemies. Only a small portion of the population supports or desires the victory of either of the violent extremes.

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"Partly Free" in the Freedom House *Survey*). Mexico has recently strengthened its relationship with Cuba. It supported the non-democratic part of the coalition that defeated Somoza in Nicaragua, as well as the FMLN/DRU in El Salvador. It seems, in effect, to be following a policy of joining with its potential enemies in order to head off the possibility of being a target itself. The situation in Mexico, both politically and ideologically, is of course much more complicated than this, but there are reasons to doubt the objectivity and independence of Mexico's position.*

Then there is France, now headed by a Socialist president whose official adviser on Latin America is Régis Debray, the former associate of Ché Guevara. Officially France sees the Duarte government not as a revolutionary but as a fascist regime. Why? In deciding how much weight to give to the French interpretation, the first thing to bear in mind is that the French have always been profoundly uninterested in, not to say contemptuous of, the tiny "banana republics" of Central America. No serious French politician has taken the time to investigate the facts or to address the merits of any issue concerning these small and uninfluential countries. Questions about them have always been dealt with politically, that is, with the French position being determined by considerations having everything to do with French interests and internal debates and little if anything to do with the local facts. In French discussion, especially among the Socialists, Central American issues have also offered a safe arena for attacking the U.S. and demonstrating one's radical credentials. Many French Socialists have a well developed —but not recently examined—perspective on Central America according to which it is an economically stagnant region, with authoritarian governments installed and controlled by the U.S., all of whose problems are caused by Yankee exploitation and domination.

Support for the FMLN/DRU also comes from the Socialist International and its major European members. Until about ten years ago the members of the Socialist International refused to support non-democratic Socialist parties or regimes. But that principle is no longer accepted. They now work with Castro; they met recently in Grenada after that tiny country endorsed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and admitted to membership Grenada's ruling party—despite its repressive behavior.

Many European Socialist leaders share the French attitude to Central America. Within their staffs and party organizations there commonly runs a division between an older moderate leadership and a growing group of younger radicals committed to some form of Marxist-Leninist or "Third World" ideology. The leaders deal with their internal problems by giving the radicals the "less important" jobs, including preparing all papers and policy guidance on Central America. The European radicals have been helped in selling their view by the position of Mexico, which, as the largest "socialist" force in the region, is paid deference on Central American issues (even though the Mexican PRI is not a member of the Socialist International).

Finally, there is the effective support for the FMLN/DRU and its false version of the facts that comes from the Western media and from some intellectuals. Not much need be said about this, by now predictable, response. In part, it rests on a simple failure to recognize what is happening in El Salvador. Delusions of this kind by now have a long history. After all, Mao was once widely reported to be an "agrarian reformer" and not a "real Communist"; Castro's totalitarian intentions were rarely acknowledged while he was coming to power and consolidating his regime; and the fact that North Vietnam controlled the forces attacking the government of South Vietnam was not generally accepted until after 600 North Vietnamese tanks and 15 divisions marched into South Vietnam in 1975 and replaced the government there. As these examples suggest—and to them may be added the failure of many in the 1930's to acknowledge the real nature of Hitler's designs in Austria and Czechoslovakia—there seems to be a special blindness in democracies to the way in which totalitarian aggressors work through front organizations within victim countries. The fact that local people do not always fully understand their situation also makes it easier for foreign observers to miss this point.

III

THE fact that the two counterrevolutionary groups attacking the government have no moral standing does not answer the question of how the United States should respond to them.

Before turning to questions of basic strategy there are two practical issues we need to face. One has been at the center of discussion, the other has been largely ignored. They are: how to prevent atrocities against the Salvadoran people, and how to improve the effectiveness of the Salvadoran military and police. There is a relation between the two questions.

Americans tend to ignore the "technical" issues of police or military tactics and other "non-humanistic" aspects of the manipulation of violence and crude power. Unfortunately such "technical details" sometimes mean the difference between victory and defeat, between totalitarian control and relative freedom.

The job of defeating guerrilla forces of the kind attacking El Salvador requires a combination of police and military measures. The police measures are primary. The job of the police is to find out who are the criminals by penetrating conspiracies and learning about clandestine channels of supply

* See Carlos Rangel's "Mexico and Other Dominoes" in the June 1981 COMMENTARY.

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and intelligence. The military's first job is to protect the police against armed attack. It must also fight against the insurrectionary force when the latter has been located by police/intelligence efforts.

Most of the police task is accomplished by patient routine measures, such as having good file systems, being known and respected and available so citizens can report what they see, being able to protect those who help, and being organized so that the information supplied is effectively integrated with other information. Systematic use of undercover agents, informers, and defectors is also a key police function that can increase the effectiveness of anti-guerrilla efforts. On the basis of police/intelligence programs and good strategy the military can then use ambush tactics with great effectiveness, incurring few if any civilian or military casualties.

None of this is terribly difficult or esoteric, but it must be learned. If the Salvadoran security forces do not know the easy and effective way to fight, they will fight in other ways. The difference is like night and day. And there is no reason to assume that routine military training can provide the methods and ideas that are needed. In fact, it is unusual for military forces to give sufficient weight and respect to police measures, which often seem like a strange and foreign sideline.

As for the military itself, training efforts to increase its effectiveness are grossly inadequate. Salvadoran soldiers receive less training than do many of the young boys trained abroad to fight for the FMLN/DRU. The army has fewer noncommissioned officers than does the enemy. Here relatively minor efforts can make an immense difference. But such efforts need to be undertaken before the FMLN/DRU can build up its forces further and before Nicaragua completes the expansion of its army, which will make that country the overwhelmingly dominant military force in Central America.

There is one other necessary arena for action. The relatively free flow of men and material into El Salvador to support the counterrevolutions must be reduced. The movement of new supplies, fresh personnel, and outside leaders must be made much more problematic, unreliable, and costly. Doing this involves political, military, police, and intelligence measures. Right now the government forces are failing.

WHEN it comes to the general strategy the United States should be following in El Salvador, one popular idea has been to focus on negotiations between the revolutionary government and the FMLN/DRU. Some say negotiations are the *only* possible solution. Fine: whenever there is fighting, negotiations should be considered. But this means more than saying negotiations are a good idea; it means finding a framework for negotiations that is based on realities.

In thinking about negotiating with the FMLN/DRU and its political front, however, a conflict immediately arises. Some members of the front do not want anything substantially different from what the government is already doing, but they are not convinced that the government means what it says. Negotiations to resolve these doubts can continue to be a goal of the government—indeed, President Duarte has continually asserted his government's willingness to negotiate with Ungo and the other democratic elements that are now serving the FMLN/DRU.

But a basic problem in negotiating with Ungo and the others is that they are not really in control of their own actions. They have agreed to serve as "another soldier in the revolution." All their military force, including the arrangements for their personal safety, is in the hands of the FMLN/DRU.

Another problem is that success in these negotiations would not end the war. If Ungo, all of the non-Communist, and even some of the Communist elements of the counterrevolution came to an agreement with the government, the fighting would not so much as slow down. After all, when these elements were in the government in 1979, the violence increased. Nor would such a negotiating success necessarily add substantially to the government's popular support in the country, because none of the political groups helping the FMLN/DRU has mass allegiance. The gain would be primarily in terms of external image—potentially valuable, but not enough to justify big risks.

One requirement for any kind of success in El Salvador, often overlooked in American discussions, is the continuing confidence of the officer corps that it will not be sold out by the politicians. The fact that the corps has thrown out much of its right wing and stated it will abide by the results of elections does not mean that it is not concerned to protect itself and its view of the country's needs. Its unity and confidence must be the bedrock on which all political and military measures are built. If negotiations to reassure Ungo or to improve El Salvador's image abroad are allowed to threaten the confidence of the army, the results may be disastrous.

In Washington one sometimes hears that Duarte wants to stop the violence but that he needs help to overcome resistance in the army. Partly on the basis of this argument, some have urged that the U.S. make its aid to El Salvador conditional on steps being taken toward preventing and punishing atrocities. This is a double error. First, there is no reason to believe that the army leaders are any less eager than President Duarte to deal with atrocities. Second, as a means of influencing government behavior, threats to cut off aid could well backfire. Our political process is not sufficiently fine-tuned to deliver subtle messages of this kind, nor can we control what others will see as a necessary response to a deadly challenge.

There is some speculation in the U.S. that the FMLN/DRU might be interested in arrangements

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to insure that free elections would be held and allowed to take effect, and that their safety and right to campaign peacefully would be guaranteed. But the FMLN/DRU has never said anything like that. Real negotiations for those purposes would be highly desirable, so long as they did not suggest to the army that it would be sold out without elections. Unfortunately there is no basis for believing that the FMLN/DRU has any interest in such negotiations. Why, indeed, would it want to accept the result of free elections? It represents a small percentage of the population. Its ideology does not require—or even advocate—free elections. The FMLN/DRU has fought for years, and believes in what it is fighting for. It also believes that sooner or later it will win. It is not interested in settling for a nice reformist, democratic, free El Salvador, with land-owning farmers and peace and prosperity. It wants a Cuba (or a Kampuchea), an "anti-imperialist" country allied with Castro and Nicaragua against the United States.

Are there any non-military measures that might work? There are some. First, there is reason to believe that if the European democracies and the Socialist parties joined the Latin democracies and the Christian Democratic parties and the free trade unions and the Catholic Church in their support of the revolutionary government, and condemned the violent counterrevolutions, then Ungo and most of the other democratic elements might be convinced to stop supporting the FMLN/DRU. This would deprive the FMLN/DRU of its hope of dislodging the U.S. It would reassure the army and thus weaken right-wing elements in the security forces, enabling the government in turn to bring security under better control and perhaps completely put down the counterrevolution of the extreme Right.

The same goal could be approached simultaneously from the opposite direction as well. The U.S. could crack down on the use of U.S. territory by the extreme Right counterrevolutionaries, and perhaps help the Salvadoran government to take similar measures to this end. Clearer action in this direction might help to convince Ungo and others in El Salvador, and democratic foreign supporters of the insurrection, to swing toward the revolutionary government.

Success in these matters would not necessarily end the fighting. The FMLN/DRU, with support from Cuba, North Korea, the Soviet Union, can keep on without any help from the Socialist International or France or even Mexico. One way or another, it is likely to be able to recruit thousands of teen-age Salvadorans a year to be trained and indoctrinated in Cuba or elsewhere. If necessary it will be able to use Nicaraguans or Cubans. Whether it will choose to do so depends on international politics. Therefore, uniting the democracies in support of the Salvadoran revolutionary government would be very useful even if it did not end the fighting right away.

IV

When societies are faced with severe challenges—external or internal—their survival often depends on whether they continue to quarrel about lesser issues or recognize the crisis, face up to the pain of having to choose one of only two or three alternatives, and commit their resources to supporting that choice.

Always in these situations everything appears confused and complex. Each alternative is fuzzy, uncertain, perhaps capable of being changed for better or worse. Sophisticated analysts can prove that the alternatives are not so stark, and that in-between results are possible. But those groups in society who use their energies to modify details, or who keep out of a conflict because no side is good enough to justify real support, lose their vote. They have no effect. The choice is then made by those who concentrate on victory. If most of the society throws away its vote, a very small but determined segment can decide the result.

El Salvador is today faced with a conflict among three forces, one of which will win and destroy the others and control the country, perhaps for many years. Two of the three alternatives would bring terrible results for the people of El Salvador right away—many thousands of deaths, a police state, scores of thousands of refugees. The third alternative, a victory for the revolutionary junta and whoever wins the electoral process initiated by the junta, would put El Salvador on the road toward democracy and economic development. That road would have many twists and turns. Periods of less democratic government and periods of costly economic policies would not be unlikely. Whether El Salvador did well would depend on many factors. But the alternatives are very much worse.

No one should underestimate the difficulty of this choice for the Salvadorans themselves, who experience daily the fear, defenselessness, and anger that are the undercurrents of life in their country. For many, saving what one believes in may mean having to form an alliance with the murderers and torturers of one's own family and friends. In this respect as in so many others, the fanatics who brought war on El Salvador have much to answer for. Yet pretending that one does not have to make the grim choice means helping one's enemies.

The ability of the moderate revolution in El Salvador to survive the deadly attacks on it from the extreme Left and the extreme Right depends on whether the Salvadoran people and leaders, and American and other democratic forces outside El Salvador, spend their energies trying to move the government a little bit Right or a little Left, or concentrate instead on helping the democratic alternative defeat its undemocratic enemies. If they fail, a brave move toward democracy will go down to bloody defeat by a band of gangsters whose drive for power will not be diverted or diffused.

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A New Direction for American Jews

Murray Friedman

As OUTSIDERS in so many of the countries in which they have lived, Jews have always had to create machinery for dealing with the broader society. Since early in the 20th century this activity has taken the form of Jewish "defense," or what has come in the United States to be called community relations—relations, that is, between the Jewish and other communities in the land. The agencies specializing in this area, beginning with the formation of the American Jewish Committee in 1906 and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in 1913, now number 11 nationally, with 108 local councils engaged in community-relations work in various cities around the country.

The forces that have led to the improvement of the position of Jews in American life lie deep within the culture itself, but over the years the community-relations agencies have had a significant role to play in the process. When the American Jewish Committee and then the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the American Jewish Congress were first formed, Protestantism or at least Christianity was the semi-official religion of the land, and anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews were widespread. The agencies set about to challenge the barriers Jews faced and to improve their image among their fellow citizens. Summarizing these activities in the 50th Anniversary Book of the ADL, the political scientist John P. Roche declared that the agencies had helped to develop "an ideology of civil liberty . . . [that] put a compelling burden upon the finest elements in the old society and upon the American conscience."

The Jewish agencies have frequently gained the support of the U.S. government on behalf of Jews suffering persecution abroad. In recent years they were a major force behind the passage of the Jackson-Vanik bill linking trade and credit concessions to the Soviet Union with that country's policy on permitting Jews to emigrate, and they have helped formulate legislation to counter the Arab boycott. They play a large part in efforts by Jews to build public support for American economic, military, and political assistance to Israel. Their presence is felt on the domestic scene when it comes to issues of civil liberties, race relations, or social reform generally.

The Jewish agencies are the wonder and envy of other groups. Only blacks, with organizations like the NAACP and Urban League, have comparable structures to promote their cause. The Sons of Italy is just getting around to developing a professional program—modeled after that of the Jewish agencies. With considerably larger numbers and, presumably, greater political clout, the Roman Catholic Church has been unable to gain support for key items on its theological and social agenda, including government aid for parochial schools and approval of its view that abortion should be illegal.

One reason for the success of the Jewish agencies, at least until recently, has been that they have identified Jewish causes with the American sense of fair play and, perhaps most importantly, that they have operated within or anticipated the broader social and political consensus in the country. Thus, early in the century a small group of upper-class Jewish leaders, mainly of German background, worked closely with members of the Wasp patriciate on a variety of programs of social reform and racial improvement widely seen as necessary at that time. Julius Rosenwald became the single most important patron of Southern black education; Louis Marshall, president of the American Jewish Committee, filed at the behest of Catholic leadership an amicus brief before the Supreme Court challenging an Oregon law requiring all children to attend public schools; Joel Spingarn long served as board chairman of the early NAACP. Although their activities may have been somewhat "advanced" politically, all these men worked essentially within what Gunnar Myrdal would later identify as the "American Creed."

To be sure, this activity was not without its internal complications and paradoxes. As Hasia R. Desia has recently observed, in promoting racial and civic equality some of the Jewish community

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leaders were at the same time working out "certain tensions of acculturation."* Fearful of appearing too "pushy" if they denounced anti-Semitism openly, many displaced their sense of being outsiders through a concern for the position of blacks. Then, too, notwithstanding their support for liberal reform and human rights, not a few were political conservatives. Marshall, for example, feared the growing power of the state over the individual and opposed federal legislation which would regulate child labor, suppress lynching, and provide a minimum wage. Moreover, most did not care for Jewish nationalism, and were wary that Zionism would raise the issue of "dual loyalty." Nevertheless, their efforts to improve race relations in the United States were based on a premise shared by many in American society as well as by Jews of all classes and backgrounds—namely, that an attack on one group was a threat to all.

By the late 30's and 40's, amid the sufferings and strains of the Great Depression, and with the threat of Hitler in Europe, the older generation of leaders was passing from the scene, and a second phase in the history of Jewish defense activities began. A group of full-time professionals now took charge of the agencies. They were lawyers, social workers, and social psychologists—men like John Slawson at the American Jewish Committee, Benjamin Epstein and Arnold Forster of the ADL, and Alexander Pekelis, Will Maslow, and Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Congress. Unlike their predecessors, they were products of the Eastern European immigration who had grown up between the wars and experienced poverty and discrimination at first-hand. They were more egalitarian in their orientation, and anxious to collaborate with wider elements of the Jewish community. "One cannot do things *for* the Jewish people; one must do it *with* the Jewish people," John Slawson declared at the Committee's 1944 annual meeting, in what was a far cry from the approach of the pre-World War I era, which had essentially been one of stewardship. But the main thrust of the new Jewish professionals and those they trained and brought into the field was not inward but outward, toward the realization of an ideal of American society in which prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance would have no place. This thrust became (in the words of Stephen Isaacs) "an almost religio-cultural obsession."

The agencies now launched an all-out assault on discrimination. Employing a group of refugee social psychologists from Nazi Germany, the American Jewish Committee sponsored a renowned series, *Studies in Prejudice*. The lead volume, *The Authoritarian Personality*, published at the height of the McCarthy era, argued that anti-Semitism was part and symptom of a generally abnormal psychological pattern in both the individual and society, while liberal tolerance was not only morally right but psychologically healthy. The Committee hired a young black psychologist named Kenneth B. Clark to prepare a paper on the impact of segregation for the White House Conference on Children in 1950. Based in part on the *Studies* series, the paper, which contended that racial segregation inflicted psychological damage on black children, was subsequently cited by the Supreme Court in its famous footnote 11 in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the 1954 decision outlawing segregation in the public schools. At this time too the ADL mounted countrywide educational campaigns utilizing films, film-strips, radio and television announcements, jingles, and other materials emphasizing the essential oneness of the human family, while the American Jewish Congress, dissatisfied with such "brotherhood sloganeering," concentrated on litigation that would harness the force of government to counter religious and racial discrimination.

In the 40's and 50's the national Jewish agencies and local community-relations councils (CRC's) wrote, and, along with church, labor, and black allies, pushed through city councils and state legislatures various fair-employment, fair-educational-practices, and fair-housing laws. By the early 60's, when the action shifted to the national level and the fight was increasingly taken over by blacks, 20 states and 40 cities, covering 60 percent of the population, had some kind of fair-employment law, while 17 states and cities had banned discrimination in the rental and sale of housing. Now the Jewish agencies broadened their efforts to support federal programs to alleviate the plight of the poor and disadvantaged. As they had been an integral part of the New Deal and Fair Deal coalitions, so they were an integral part of the Great Society coalitions of the 1960's.

Throughout this same span of time, with the American Jewish Congress in the lead, the agencies also set about, through a series of court tests, to seek removal of religious practices from the public schools and other areas of public life. When, following World War II, the Catholic Church began to press for various forms of government financing of private and parochial schools, the Jewish agencies, along with civil-liberties groups and private individuals, challenged this as a violation of the First Amendment. By the late 40's, a new body of law took shape on church-state relations, reflecting a stricter reading. In *Everson* v. *Board of Education of Ewing Township* (1947), the Supreme Court asserted the doctrine of thorough separation. "In the words of Jefferson," the Court ruled, "the clause against the establishment of religion by law was intended to erect 'a wall of separation' between Church and State." This definition was reiterated the following year in a released-time case and made even firmer four years later. The stage was now set for a series of

* *In the Almost Promised Land*, Greenwood Press (1977).

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Supreme Court decisions in the 60's and 70's removing Bible reading and prayer from the schools and virtually every form of government financing of private and parochial education.

IT WOULD be no exaggeration to suggest that the 40's and 50's represented the "Jewish phase" of the civil-rights revolution. According to James Q. Wilson in *Negro Politics* (1960), blacks and black organizations usually played a minor role in these early battles; indeed, there were already signs that black leaders were becoming irritated by the prominence of Jewish groups in the field. Although the economic position of Jews themselves had improved significantly, and direct discrimination against them had declined, the agencies continued to press vigorously for the expansion of civil rights as part of their generalized concern for social justice, a concern which they identified both with the Jewish interest and with Jewish tradition. Similarly with the issue of church and state. The American Jewish Congress and its gifted counsel, Leo Pfeffer, developed the intellectual rationale and had some role in over a third of the leading church-state cases, while acting as adviser in many other cases.*

From the point of view of the agencies themselves, this second phase—roughly from the end of World War II to the mid-60's—was a kind of "golden age." The agencies entered into their various battles convinced they were working for a safer and more humane society for Jews and all Americans. And in many of their battles they proved successful.

In retrospect, of course, it may be seen that their idealism was heavily molded by their ideology. The new class of professionals, to be plain about it, shared a liberal-Left perspective. In a 1945 essay entitled "Full Equality in a Free Society," Alexander Pekelis went so far as to write: "American Jews will find more reasons for taking an affirmative attitude toward being Jews as members of an organized movement, if they are part and parcel of a great American and human force working for a better world . . . whether or not the individual issues involved touch directly upon so-called Jewish interests. The tradition and fate of [Jews] are indissolubly bound to those of the forces of liberalism." For many of these men the Great Depression had demonstrated the need to curb the excesses of an unbridled capitalism and hence the need for a broadened government role in providing supports and services, especially for those at the bottom of the social scale. In helping to create the American version of the welfare state, the new professionals were in part reflecting their suspicions of the private-enterprise system as a means of distributing the rewards of society.

But the equalitarian ideal that powered so much of their zeal also carried them too far. Thus, their desire to rectify the abuses of the economic system led them at times to deprecate its virtues as well. Or again, in attacking the institutional patterns of segregation in public schools and elsewhere in the society, they went beyond arguing that these arrangements violated the Fourteenth Amendment requiring equal treatment before the law; they rested their case on "psychological" and "sociological" findings which were of dubious relevance to the constitutional issues at hand but which proved politically entangling, for they led inexorably to efforts to achieve racial balance even where, as in the North, legal discrimination for the most part no longer existed.

In striving for the separation of church and state, the agencies earnestly believed they were preventing harassment and providing safeguards for Jews, religious dissenters, and nonbelievers. Their activities, however, reflected a secular bias that was at best indifferent, when it was not actively hostile, to religion itself. They chose not to see that the "church" they sought to disestablish was not just a sect but embraced a collection of beliefs and values deeply embedded in the society, values which while causing uneasiness in religious outsiders, provided an order and coherence that had made it possible for Jews (and others) not only to live comfortably but indeed to prosper.†

The social and political philosophy of the new professionals was subjected to little challenge during the second phase, but it began to encounter special difficulties in the changed circumstances in which America and the American Jewish community found themselves in the late 60's and 70's. By this time, an economy which had expanded greatly following World War II, thus helping to fuel the battle against discrimination and disadvantage, was beginning to slow down. The problem was compounded by the age and the dwindling competitiveness of major industries, and by the great rise in oil prices following the Arab boycott of 1973 which contributed sharply to the growth of inflation. The worsening of the economy spurred widespread resentments over the high cost of living, mounting taxes, the existence of a seemingly permanent and even expanding welfare class, and the burden of a vast government bureaucracy necessary to maintain it.

In addition to all this, Americans were becoming worried, too, about the moral climate of the times: the growth in violent crime, the deterioration in sexual standards, the denigration of the values associated with family life. Finally, there was a perceived weakening of the country's position in world affairs, and impotence in the face of Soviet and other forms of aggression.

Jews shared in much of this new anxiety, and on top of it they were worried about mounting threats to Israel's security as a result of the rise of Arab oil power and a change in the climate of lib-

* Frank Sorauf, *The Wall of Separation*, Princeton (1976).

† See Terry Eastland, "In Defense of Religious America," COMMENTARY, June 1981.

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eral opinion toward the Jewish state. At home they had witnessed the transformation of the civil-rights revolution into a race revolution, in which black militants, along with a number of their liberal allies, had begun to press for quota systems in hiring and education, and had come to identify with a Third World ideology which was sometimes explicitly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic. Without being quite aware of it, the organized Jewish community had entered yet a new phase of its development.

How have the agencies responded to the changed circumstances in which they find themselves? The best way to determine this is to examine the recent Joint Program Plans of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), the umbrella organization through which the national Jewish agencies and local CRC's join together for consultation and planning. This document, which is reviewed annually, appraises "the changes that occurred during the year . . . [and] projects into the year ahead the programmatic accommodations that these changes suggest."

The 1981-82 Plan is, indeed, impressive in the range of its concerns and projected activities. Opening with a major section on Israel, it proceeds to cover energy policy, the United States at the UN, Soviet Jewry, Jews in other lands, the Holocaust, issues of social and economic justice, Jewish security and individual freedom, church-state and Jewish-Christian relationships. The previous year's Plan included as well domestic and family issues and an extensive discussion of the position of the Jewish agencies on affirmative action.

The fact that 11 out of 51 pages in the new Plan are given over to various aspects of the Middle East crisis reflects the centrality that Israel has come to play in the lives of American Jews. (In the 50's, the Plan barely mentioned the Jewish state.) Similarly prominent in recent years has been the whole complex of issues stemming from Soviet policy toward the two to three million Jews in that country. More recently still, the deleterious effects of Arab oil power on American foreign policy and on American Jews have been reflected in the encouragement the Plan gives to efforts to gain U.S. energy independence. Indeed, on the whole matter of threats to Jews abroad, and on the implications of international anti-Semitism, the organized Jewish community has moved relatively quickly and efficiently.

It is when the Plan turns to domestic and social issues that problems arise. Since the late 60's, for example, there has been a serious heightening of black-Jewish tensions. In the aftermath of the Andrew Young affair in 1979, a section was added to the 1980-81 Plan on "Anti-Semitism in the Black Community." Noting that rising indices of black anti-Semitism had "created concern and anxiety among Jews," the Plan went on to examine the causes of the deterioration of the old alliance, including the shift of the black struggle from the South to the North and "a growing sense of kinship among some blacks with people of the 'Third World.'" Yet in an attempt, perhaps, to display even-handedness or to demonstrate continued Jewish identification with the plight of the poor, the Plan went on to place a major share of the responsibility for recent tensions on the shoulders of the Jews themselves. It noted the "progressive distancing of the steadily more secure (economically) and accepted (socially) Jewish community from problems of still relatively insecure and disadvantaged minorities," and urged "intensive interpretation within the Jewish community to overcome *anti-black animus among Jews*" (emphasis added). Calling on Jewish organizations to seek to restore ties with blacks, the Plan made no sharp demand that black leaders deal with the growth of anti-Semitism among better-educated and middle-class blacks, or that those leaders making provocative statements cease doing so.

Much the same hesitation to confront inimical positions of friends and allies for fear of alienating them or being criticized as illiberal can be seen in the response of the 1980-81 Plan to affirmative action. A number of Jewish agencies had filed briefs before the Supreme Court opposing racial quotas in the *Bakke* case. When their stand evoked a sharp response from black organizations and others, these agencies backed off (the Anti-Defamation League was an exception). The Plan was thus able to report "no consensus . . . in the Jewish community" in *Fullilove* and *Weber*, two cases subsequent to *Bakke* in which racial quotas were undeniably and explicitly at issue. In reality, there has been extremely strong opposition to affirmative-action practices among rank-and-file Jews (who nevertheless continue to support efforts to broaden the involvement of minorities in all phases of American life). As Morris B. Abram, the veteran civil-rights leader and former president of the American Jewish Committee, put it recently, "The emphasis during the past decade on preferential treatment based on racial distinctions . . . has corroded the liberal body politic." The Jewish agencies, however, have hesitated to throw their full support behind the principle of merit that is so important to Jews, to Americans in general, and to minorities themselves. When, as in *Fullilove* and *Weber*, that principle has been openly challenged, the agencies have remained silent.

In the broader area of social and economic policy the agencies have not been unaware of the growing tide of sentiment signaled by the Proposition-13 movement and the election of Ronald Reagan. Indeed, the agencies have attempted to respond to some of these concerns in their successive Plans. The section on Social and Economic Justice in the 1980-81 Plan urged "study [of] means of easing the burden of inflation and rising taxes on the middle class. . . ." In the next breath, however,

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the statement went on to declare that the purpose of such relief was "to diminish their hostility toward government programs for the disadvantaged." One would think that easing the burdens of the middle class, in whose ranks most Jews fall, and which provides the cement that holds society together, would be considered a worthy end in itself. This is, after all, the group that sustained the largest increases in taxation between 1953 and 1977, according to a recent analysis by Seymour Martin Lipset and Everett Carll Ladd, and even in a practical sense it is questionable whether a middle class driven to the wall by high taxes and inflation would be capable of doing much for the poor. But in the thinking of the Plan the middle class seems to be an entity whose defining quality is its alleged "hostility" to government-sponsored efforts to aid the disadvantaged—which is neither true nor politically useful.

Having bowed, at least formally, to the resentments felt by so many Americans, the Plans serve up a rehash of the old and now largely discredited liberal agenda. The 1980-81 Plan called for "a national health insurance program," increased federal aid to public education, and "accelerated desegregation of public schools" even though most large cities have been rapidly running out of whites with whom minorities can desegregate. "We again recommend," it stated in response to the outgoing Carter-administration budget, "that Jewish community-relations agencies convey to the President, to the Congress, and to state and local officials and legislators their opposition to cuts in necessary services and programs; and that they join with like-minded groups in vigorous advocacy of these programs." And the 1981-82 Plan extols the virtues of a wide range of welfare programs including aid to families with dependent children, food stamps, school lunches, CETA, Medicaid, housing and community development, and legal services to the poor. What neither Plan acknowledges is that many of these programs, however well-intended, or even necessary in some form as a temporary means of protecting the needy, offer no permanent solution to an underclass that has grown over the years and has become more difficult to sustain given the country's declining level of productivity. The only concession the 1981-82 Plan makes to the realities of the 80's is to call for "continuing close scrutiny of government spending with a view to eliminating inefficiency in administration, waste, needless programs, fraud, and other excesses"—within the context of the Plan, just pious platitudes.

One need not repudiate the whole of what Senator Daniel P. Moynihan has called "a tradition of intelligent involvement of American government in the problems of American society" to acknowledge that the American welfare state has gotten out of hand. Nor need one be a partisan of the economic philosophy of the Reagan administration (as the conservative columnist George Will has observed, there has developed in the Reagan initiatives a "tone of dogmatic disparagement of government . . . that suggests that all cuts are morally easy because government cannot do anything right"). But the Plans show no disposition to dismantle *any* aspect of the welfare state. Quite the contrary. Their ideological bias systematically favors governmental over private-sector solutions, and systematically discounts what people can do to solve their problems by dint of their own struggle. As a first priority for full employment, the 1980-81 Plan projected the need for "a larger number of public-service jobs." The section on energy in the 1981-82 Plan recognizes the wide range of efforts necessary for the nation to achieve energy independence but criticizes the Reagan administration for looking to "market forces" to "provide adequate incentive for alternative energy source development."

It is ironic that agencies representing the Jewish community, worried as they are about the break-up of their old coalition with the poor and with blacks, should cling to the formulas of the past just when a significant group of black leaders and intellectuals, as well as broader segments of the black community, have begun to question them. "Very often, legislation intended to help the disadvantaged," Thomas Sowell has written, "in fact pays people to stay disadvantaged and penalizes them to the extent that they make an effort to rise from disadvantage." William Julius Wilson, in his widely discussed book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, has called upon blacks to look up from their preoccupation with racial strategies and recognize that much of the current problem of the black underclass is "connected with the structure and functioning of the modern American economy." Leon Sullivan, founder of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers, has urged a "new pragmatism" in the Reagan era. "We're going to have to rely more on self-help and the private sector," he has declared. The Plans devote a number of pages to spelling out support for affirmative-action programs; Wilson argues that they have mostly helped educated blacks and "are not really designed to address the unique problems of poor blacks."* And where the new Plan calls for "accelerated desegregation of public schools," black parents in Boston, Detroit, Atlanta, and, most recently, Dallas have turned their backs on school-busing programs and have sought to improve the quality of education in their local schools.

The fact is that 83 percent of blacks work for a living, 77 percent are not on welfare, and 62 percent do not live in poverty. This suggests that most stand to gain more from policies that lead to

* "The Black Community in the 1980's: Questions of Race, Class, and Public Policy," *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, March 1981.

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economic expansion than from special governmental welfare programs. When this is understood, it helps to explain why an astonishing 44 percent of black Californians thought enough of Proposition 13 to give it their vote. Last June, Data Black Public Opinion Polls, a national polling and research organization, reported that 37 percent of its respondents favored a lower minimum wage as a way of reducing teen-age unemployment (36 percent said that such a wage would adversely affect employment, and 28 percent were not sure). As dissatisfaction with existing policies and programs has grown, there are those, like the political scientist Martin Kilson, who feel black leaders have been locked too tightly into the political formulas of the past. ". . . The Left/liberal axis no longer has—if it ever did have—a monopoly on effective policy for black needs," Kilson declared at the Black Alternatives Conference in San Francisco last December. The same point could be made to the Jewish agencies, which continue to remain transfixed by welfare-state policies.

Indeed, as traditional liberalism has run out of gas, several "conservative" sources have brought forward a number of new initiatives aimed at helping the poor. The concept of "free-enterprise zones," imported from England, has been introduced in Congress by Representatives Robert Garcia (D., N.Y.) and Jack Kemp (R., N.Y.), after extensive discussions with the black caucus. The legislation seeks to reduce taxes and government regulations in declared poverty zones as an incentive for businesses which must hire a proportion of the unemployed living in the area. Through its "mediating structures" project, the American Enterprise Institute has been studying how to strengthen voluntary, ethnic, and church groups that stand between the individual and large impersonal institutions like government, corporations, and unions. Neither "conservative" nor "liberal," these studies, working from a model created by Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, offer no instant solutions to the modern dilemma of the welfare state and may even be flawed as so many of the older panaceas have been. What is significant is that others are doing what the Jewish agencies should be doing—reaching out beyond the formulas of another era in search of policies and programs that fit our current needs.

In all fairness, the Joint Program Plan is genuinely concerned that the poor and disabled will be cut adrift by the Reagan budget cuts. And, from a purely self-interested point of view, it voices accurately the fears of many Jewish social-service agencies and professionals that the Reagan economies will eliminate or sharply curtail programs for the Jewish disadvantaged and elderly which they have come to count upon. This concern, however, fails to take account of the changes which welfare-state policies have wrought in the character and function of many of the Jewish social-service agencies themselves. As federal largesse became available during the Great Society, these agencies expanded. A number took on additional functions, including training minority workers and youth. As Lloyd Setleis, dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work of Yeshiva University, has noted:

> In the 60's, and until recently, the relationship to government became entangled and entwined with grants, contracts for the purchase of services, varied projects, and research. These involvements included conditions, requirements, and observance of legal restraints, such as those stipulated in affirmative-action laws which limited and defused the Jewish interest, often leaving only the name of the agency intact. Even this became an issue as some agencies were given the ultimatum to eliminate symbols and any designation suggesting a Jewish identification. . . . The final irony, if not the low blow: federal programs do not acknowledge the Jew as a recognized minority.*

Setleis sees the Reagan budget cuts as forcing Jewish social-service agencies to return to their basic and proper functions. Sanford Solender, former head of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, has made a related point. He noted last May that although the earnings of prospective Jewish donors have soared, the rise in levels of philanthropy has been "unimpressive," a circumstance he traced to the excessive reliance of agencies on government grants.

A more serious consequence of clinging to older strategies—more serious from the point of view of vital Jewish interests—is the failure of the Jewish agencies to take a forthright stand on issues of national defense. In a sense, this would appear anomalous, since America's military posture in the world has a close connection with the safety and security of Israel. Indeed, in January 1981, as the Reagan administration took office, the NJCRAC debated this topic and prepared a compromise draft statement which recommended "establishment of U.S. military facilities" in the Middle East and urged Jewish agencies to "support . . . defense programs" to achieve this goal. The backing given, however, was qualified. The statement avoided any specific endorsement for the defense budget necessary to carry out its recommendation. In a classic "guns or butter" debate, this was the requirement demanded by the "butter" side. As the summary of the session explained, it was feared that "an increased defense budget can adversely affect our relationship with other constituencies with whom we work on domestic issues."

Some of the other difficulties faced by the Jewish agencies in adjusting to new social and politi-

* "A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Jewish Character of the Jewish Agency," presented before the Mini-Conference of the Jewish Orientation and Training Seminar, New York City, March 4, 1981.

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cal realities can be seen in sections of the Joint Program Plan dealing with Jewish-Christian relations and the New Right. The 1980-81 Plan expressed concern, properly, about anti-Semitic statements made by Protestant evangelical clergymen, about efforts to restore prayer and Bible reading to the public schools, and about the targeting of political candidates who wander even slightly from a fundamentalist definition of political morality. The seriousness with which the agencies view this threat is indicated by the placement of the discussion in the section entitled "Jewish Security and Individual Freedom," immediately after "Organized and Political Anti-Semitism."

The growth of the Christian Right does, indeed, pose serious and disturbing questions for Jews and other Americans, but the discussion in the Plan is framed in the narrowest of contexts—civil liberties. Ignored here is the broad confluence between the Christian Right and a feeling that exists among large segments of the American people—a feeling of rebellion against what Daniel J. Elazar has called "the new paganism" which has been the dominant moral and cultural ethos in this country for almost a generation. "What gives the Moral Majority and other religious groups their clout," Burton Yale Pines pointed out in the April/May issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, "is that on many key issues the morality they proclaim is the morality of the majority."

There is no evidence, at least as yet, that the tactics employed by the Christian Right have won the support of most Americans. But what about the issues with which it is concerned? The Joint Program Plans have been virtually silent on such matters as crime, pornography, violence and gratuitous sex on television, the drug culture, rampant abortion, family dislocation, and other forms of behavior that have outraged many Americans, including many Jews. When confronted with some of these issues, the agencies have tended to come down hard on the side of individual freedom and "choice." Thus the 1981-82 Plan urges the agencies "to make known publicly and to members of Congress . . . their opposition to restrictions [to] unreasonable restraints on the freedom of pregnant women to make personal choices as to abortion." No distinctions are drawn between abortion when a threat to the life of the mother, rape, or incest is involved and abortion simply as a form of contraception. There is no understanding here of the moral complexities of this issue, no concern for societal norms and standards at a time when an estimated 1.5 million abortions take place each year, or when in New York City, for example, the number of abortions recently exceeded the number of live births.

Closely related is the rigidity of the agencies in dealing with First Amendment questions on the separation of church and state. The removal of religious symbols and expressions from the public schools and other public arenas continues to remain a high priority—"as matters demanding sustained attention." An entire section of the 1980-81 Plan, "Religious Freedom and Church-State Separation," was devoted to this subject and catalogued violations currently taking place. In addition to opposing the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools—a position the Supreme Court subsequently agreed with—the 1980-81 Plan recommended that agencies file a brief in a case in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, attacking the singing of sectarian musical selections in the public schools during Christmas. The 1981-82 Plan urges continued opposition to legislation allowing or requiring prayer or "silent meditation" in public schools, as well as opposing tax-credit and voucher plans to assist families who send their children to private and parochial schools.

Such opposition is consistent with the secular tilt or ideology of the Jewish agencies over the years, now reaffirmed in the face of counter-activities by the Christian Right. The fear, of course, is that even small transgressions against the principle of separation of church and state may lead to greater and more substantive violations. But one may question whether "silent meditation," the singing of *Adeste Fideles* during the Christmas season, and the posting of the Ten Commandments on the walls of the Sioux Falls, or for that matter the New York City, public schools are the critical problems the Plans make them out to be. May not the breakdown of the orderly norms of our society constitute, in fact, a far more serious threat to the Jewish community? To be sure, displaying the Ten Commandments on a schoolhouse wall would not in itself strike a major blow against the "new paganism," but an argument can be made that *removing* the institutional and religious supports and symbols of decency may contribute to the decline of morality itself. "It is a mistake to assume that rejecting the lunacy of the far Right means we must deny the value to society of a religious sensibility," Charles Krauthammer recently wrote in the *New Republic*. The connection between social pathology and the decline of that "religious sensibility" has been commented upon by such diverse figures as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Just as Jews have fought hard and long for social reform, so it has become urgent that they find ways to encourage those forces that contribute to social stability. The Jewish agencies have failed to recognize this area as a primary focus of attention, for Jews and others, in the 80's.

THE strong position the agencies take on separation also collides in some measure with their equally deep concern for America's disadvantaged when it comes to the matter of tuition tax credits and vouchers for parents who send their children to private and parochial schools. The Jewish agencies are strongly opposed to such programs despite the fact that in

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recent years large numbers of minority-group parents, dissatisfied with the poor education their children are receiving in inner-city public schools, have been sending them in greater numbers to parochial schools. (A recent survey of 64 inner-city parochial schools in Los Angeles, New Orleans, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, New York, Newark, and elsewhere shows 70 percent of the student body coming from minority groups.) In a recent study of high-school sophomores and seniors, James S. Coleman has reported that students learn more in private and parochial than in public schools. He has argued that "tax credits or vouchers would differentially benefit poor and minority students" because they have the effect of making a "luxury item" more generally available.

In line with this view, Senators Daniel P. Moynihan (D., N.Y.) and Robert Packwood (R., Ore.) have introduced tuition-tax-credit legislation in Congress to provide some financial relief for parents who send their children to such schools. Opponents of the legislation, mainly public-education groups and teachers' unions, along with the Jewish agencies, fear that these credits will endanger the public schools, which are already financially hard-pressed and which, unlike private schools, must take all who come. The arguments developed by the two sides are serious and commanding, and cannot be decided, or even fully rehearsed, here. The point is that the Jewish agencies have refused to face the broader issues and dilemmas involved—the poor record, in the main, of inner-city schools in educating minority-group children, the desperate desire of poor and lower-middle-class parents to raise the quality of education of their children, the role of private and parochial schools as intermediate institutions, in the Berger-Neuhaus sense, and as anchors holding the last body of whites in the cities. In its automatic way, the 1981-82 Plan simply repeats its opposition "to tax credits, voucher plans, and similar proposals."

THE various social crises of the 80's pose a serious challenge to the organized Jewish community. Large numbers of Americans have come to question liberal ideology and programs in favor of a moderate conservatism—moderate in temper, moderate in contrast to what is offered by the New Right and the Christian Right, and moderate in contrast to much of the recent rhetoric of the Left. If our current political leadership is unable to bring about a decline in inflation, to revive the economy, and to restore a level of decency in social behavior, one shudders to think of what may follow.

The Jewish agencies can take pride in having helped to shape the American conscience on issues of civil liberties and civil rights over the years. What they have not done is to confront some of the implications and consequences of their activities, their policies, and their ideas, let alone to ponder what will be required of them in the years ahead.

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Patenting Life

Leon R. Kass

EVERY once in a while, we come upon an event of seemingly minor import which, on reflection, turns out to betoken deep and problematic truths about our culture. The "Patenting of Life" decision is such a significant event.

On June 16, 1980, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that a living microorganism was patentable matter, under the provision of patent laws enacted by Congress in 1952. In 1972, Ananda Chakrabarty, a microbiologist at the University of Illinois, had filed patent application, assigned to the General Electric Company, asserting multiple claims related to a novel bacterial strain that he had obtained with the aid of techniques of genetic engineering, a strain capable of degrading many components of crude oil and thus potentially useful in the biological control of oil spills. In addition to readily granted process claims for the method of producing the bacterium, and claims relating to the mode of carrying such bacteria to water-borne oil spills, Chakrabarty claimed patent rights to the bacteria themselves. This last claim, at first rejected by the patent examiner and then by the Patent Office Board of Appeals, was finally granted on appeal by the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals in 1979, in the decision affirmed by a narrow five-four vote of the Supreme Court a year later (*Diamond* v. *Chakrabarty*, 447 U.S. 303).

The case attracted considerable attention, but the Court's decision fell short of the momentous ruling some had anticipated. For one thing, the Court was divided. For another, both sides agreed that the question before them was simply "a narrow one of statutory interpretation," requiring the Court to construe the language of that section of the patent law which defined patentable matter. The Court's opinion, and the dissent, were largely technical. Thus, readers of the opinion who looked for large philosophical dicta about man's art and living nature or about genetic engineering came away disappointed. Alas, it looked as if the Court was, for a change, being simply judicious, doing no more than its proper work.

Yet the decision was not inconsequential. Indeed, it has already contributed to numerous recent practices. Patent claims are now pending for other living microorganisms, as well as for animal cell lines propagated in tissue culture, allegedly valuable for uses ranging from a cheaper means of making penicillin to novel treatments for specific cancers. Genetic-engineering firms are springing up all around. Academic molecular biologists are being courted by industry, with astounding financial incentives. Major grants for genetic-engineering research to universities have been given by industries in exchange for patent rights to any resulting useful and profitable discoveries. Under such an agreement, Hoechst, the German chemical company, has just given $50 million for a new genetic-engineering institute to Harvard Unversity, which, after considerable faculty opposition, had only recently abandoned plans to form its own genetic-engineering company. Many industries are tooling up in anticipation of the flood of new organisms and cell lines to be brought into being with the aid of human ingenuity, spurred on by our ingenious stroke to encourage genius, the patent laws. True, the art of genetic engineering was born and would grow without the *Chakrabarty* decision. But there is no question that it will now grow much, much faster.

But the *Chakrabarty* decision is useful in yet another, perhaps more fundamental, respect. It is useful for thought, for reflection on the relation between modern science and politics, and between science and the American polity in particular, especially as that relation is embodied in and exemplified by the patent laws. Indeed, the *Chakrabarty* case provides a wonderful mirror in which we can see fundamental features of the American polity, and therewith of modernity itself, and discern some of its deeper tensions: the relation of private interests or rights and the common good; the purposes of science and thought and their relation to practice and to the public interest; and, finally, the prevailing view of man's place in and attitude toward the natural world. Before looking

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into that mirror, we need to describe some contours of the broader background.

I

SCIENCE in the public interest is a guiding intention of modern science and has been since its origins in the 17th century. Though we hear much about the distinction between pure and applied science—and I too shall distinguish them later—we must begin by emphasizing the essentially practical and social intention of modern science as such. Unlike ancient science, which sought knowledge of *what* things are, to be contemplated as an end-in-itself satisfying to the knower, modern science seeks knowledge of *how* things work, to be used as a means for the relief and comfort of all humanity, knowers and nonknowers alike. Standing on the threshold of the new science of mathematical physics, Descartes appeals for popular support of his researches by announcing the good news of knowledge "very useful in life":

> [S]o soon as I had acquired some general notions concerning Physics . . . I believed that I could not keep them concealed *without greatly sinning against the law which obliges us to procure, as much as in us lies, the general good of all mankind.* For they caused me to see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that, instead of that speculative philosophy which is taught in the Schools, we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heaven, and all the other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and *thus render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.* This is not merely to be desired with a view to the invention of an infinity of arts and crafts which enable us to enjoy without any trouble the fruits of the earth and all the good things which are to be found there, but also principally because it brings about the preservation of health, which is without doubt the chief blessing and the foundation of all other blessings in this life. For the mind depends so much on the temperament and disposition of the bodily organs that, if it is possible to find a means of rendering men wiser and cleverer than they have hitherto been, I believe that it is in medicine that it must be sought. (*Discourse on Method,* Part VI. Emphasis added.)

The announced goal of the new science is the mastery and possession of nature, and the purposes of mastery are humanitarian: the conquest of external necessity, the promotion of bodily health and longevity, the provision of psychic peace or a new kind of wisdom.

Even the notions and ways of science manifest a conception of knowledge for the sake of power: nature is conceived mechanistically, and explanation is in terms of efficient or moving causes; hidden truths are gained by acting on nature, i.e., through experiment; inquiry is made "methodical," through the imposition of order and schemes of measurement "made" by the intellect; knowledge, embodied in *laws* rather than theorems, becomes "systematic" under the rules of a new mathematics expressly *invented* for this purpose. Modern science rejects, as meaningless or useless, questions that cannot be answered by application of the method. In all these fundamental ways, modern science has a practical cast. This remains true of the science practiced even by those great scientists who are driven by curiosity and the desire for truth and who have themselves no interest in that mastery and possession of nature for which science is largely esteemed by the rest of us.

Though essentially linked to practice, modern science is, in certain important respects, morally neutral. It does not itself seek knowledge of the good. Indeed, it looks upon nature, its object, as neutral and indifferent to the good or the beautiful. Moreover, the technical power it yields can be used for good or ill. Nevertheless, modern science is guided overall by an ethical—if prideful—intention: a lifting up of downtrodden humanity, a reversal of the curses laid upon Adam and Eve, and, ultimately, a restoration of the tree of life, *by means of* the tree of knowledge. Never mind the question how a science invincibly ignorant of and in principle skeptical about standards of better and worse can *know* how to do *good* for mankind. The new humanitarians simply point to the seemingly self-evident truth that life becomes better as it becomes less poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

GRADUALLY, and increasingly as it began to make good its promise of technological fruit from the tree of useful knowledge, science was welcomed into partnership with the political community. Yet thoughtful men disagreed sharply about how science and the useful arts would and should relate to morals and politics. Close to one extreme was the view that popular enlightenment—and particularly the teachings of modern science—undermined ruling opinions and beliefs, especially religious beliefs, necessary for a good regime, and that unbridled progress would lead to luxury, the liberation and inflation of vain and foolish desires, and the debasement of morals and taste. Though they welcomed science's contributions to health and plenty, these thinkers argued the need for settled laws, customs, and mores to restrain the turbulent and licentious souls of men. In the absence of such restraints, the conquest of nature without could enslave us to unruly nature within.

Even Francis Bacon, perhaps the greatest proponent of the marriage of science and politics, un-

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derstood that the novelty sought by the former was not always congenial to the stability required by the latter. Bacon's image of the best community, presented in his *New Atlantis*, does indeed award a central place to Baconian science: the jewel and lantern of the kingdom is a prodigious, state-supported, scientific research foundation, called Solomon's House or the College of the Six Days Works (which, by the way, artfully creates new species through genetic manipulation). But the community is not enlightened. The populace has little access to the scientific goings-on, and the scientists practice self-censorship to avoid publicizing dangerous knowledge. A benevolent state, with the help of or perhaps under the direction of the scientists, apparently closely regulates the lives of its inhabitants by means of austere rituals, state-supported (albeit tolerant) religion, and—one suspects—perhaps even some scientifically-based means of behavior modification. According to Bacon, the mixture of science and politics, though desirable and even urgent, was potentially explosive and needed delicate handling.

In contrast, some of the Enlightenment thinkers of the 18th century and their descendants were much more sanguine about the easy compatibility of science and society. The most optimistic ones prophesied an unlimited and *coupled* progress of science and morality: the progress of science and technology would conquer necessity and alleviate human misery, and man thus emancipated from nature's harsh and cruel necessities would flower morally into the good creature only his neediness prevents him from being. Man once liberated and enlightened, the external restraints imposed on him by law, mores, and religion would eventually become unnecessary. In the end, the state would wither away; politics, the rule over men, would be replaced by administration, the management of things. Our various species of Marxism are the lineal descendants of this messianic view of human perfectibility based on progress in the arts and sciences.

To summarize, whereas pre-modern political thinkers and statesmen placed their trust in law and morals, and doubted the ethical and social benefits of inquiry, modern science, devoted to the public good, found a political home and able defenders in modern, liberal regimes. Nevertheless, the proper balance and relation between science-technology and law or morals, between change and stability, remained an open question.

II

THE FOUNDERS of the American republic, though influenced by optimistic Enlightenment thought, were hardly utopians; they pursued a middle course. They knew human nature well enough not to underestimate the crucial importance of good laws, education, and also religion for the preservation of decency and public-spiritedness. But they also appreciated fully the promise of science. The American republic is, to my knowledge, the first regime explicitly to embrace scientific and technical progress and officially to claim its importance for the public good. The United States Constitution, which is silent on education and morality, speaks up about scientific progress. It does so in the course of defining the powers of Congress (Article I, Sec. 8):

> The Congress shall have Power . . . To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.

"To promote the Progress of Science and the useful Arts." It is curious that this provision has come to be known as the Copyright and Patent Provision rather than the Provision on Progress in the Sciences and Useful Arts; for such progress is the explicit goal and purpose of the congressional power to enact the copyright and patent laws. These statutes, which we think of largely as protecting so-called intellectual property, were in the first instance thought of as useful to scientific and technical progress.

But progress was not itself the final end. Congress was given power to promote the *useful* arts, not the useless ones (e.g., the liberal arts or the fine arts). In the *Federalist* (No. 43), Madison speaks of the unquestionable *utility* of this congressional power to promote progress, and the context suggests that by its utility he means its usefulness to the public good.* From this we infer that the useful arts and sciences were meant to be subordinated to, and in the service of, the well-being of the nation. Not progress for progress's sake, but progress that might serve the enduring and unchanging goals set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution, among them, to provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare, and thus, indirectly, to establish justice, to insure domestic tranquility, and to secure the blessings of

* The *Federalist*'s explanation and defense of this provision, to which we shall refer again, comprises the following brief paragraph:

> The utility of this power will scarcely be questioned. The copyright of authors has been solemnly adjudged in Great Britain to be a right of common law. The right to useful inventions seems with equal reason to belong to the inventors. The public good fully coincides in both cases with the claims of individuals. The States cannot separately make effectual provision for either of the cases, and most of them have anticipated the decision of this point by laws passed at the instance of Congress.

The fourth sentence seems to be a conclusion from the first three. Since the second and third deal with "claims of individuals," we infer that the first considers "the public good." It is worth noting that the extension of the common-law teaching on copyright to cover "the right to useful inventions" is treated here as an American innovation, albeit one that can be adjudged "with equal reason."

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liberty to ourselves and our posterity. The American republic embraces change, but in the service of duration; science, but in the service of liberty and justice, defined by law. In this respect the Copyright and Patent Provision is perhaps only the most obvious example of the American way. For the entire Constitution is a deliberate embodiment of balanced tensions between science and law and between stability and novelty, inasmuch as the Founders self-consciously sought to *institutionalize* the improvements of the "science of politics," and in such a way that would stably perpetuate openness to future change.

How best to promote the arts and sciences? How to induce talented men to behave for the common good? The Constitution once again makes a clear and measured choice: private enterprise, governed and protected by law. Other possibilities were considered by the Convention. Madison had proposed, among the powers of Congress, "To establish a university" and "To encourage by premiums and provisions, the advancement of useful knowledge and discoveries." Yet the Convention rejected the establishment of a national university and the federal support of science through prizes and provisions, and adopted, apparently without debate, the provision which encourages progress by adding the fuel of interest to the fire of genius.

This reliance on self-interest and the motive of gain might be attributable to the Founders' hardheaded appraisal of the selfish tendencies of most human beings; and cynics have sometimes attributed such motives to the Founders themselves. But a careful look at the constitutional text indicates that the patent provision is a matter not only of calculation but also of justice. Congress is empowered to secure, that is, to make safe and protect, a *right* of authors and inventors to the fruits of their genius and energy, a right which, by implication, antedates the Constitution. Indeed, this "Right of Authors and Inventors to their respective Writings and Discoveries" is the first and *only* right mentioned in the body of the original Constitution of 1787 (that is, before the Amendments and Bill of Rights). To quote Madison: "The copyright of authors has been solemnly adjudged in Great Britain to be a right of common law. The right to useful inventions seems with equal reason to belong to the inventors."

There is justice, then, in the claims of copyright and patent. To be sure, doing justice will be complicated if the patent prize is awarded only for finishing first in a race in which the winner ran only the last leg of a long relay, tens or hundreds having assisted him. Nevertheless, everyone sees the at least *prima facie* claim that justice requires protecting the labors of the imaginative and industrious against theft by the sly and lazy. If theft of property is wrong, the right of patent is right, at least in some sense. The foundation of the patent law is not only utilitarian, but also ethical.

Indeed, it is ethical also in its consequences for character. The law not only protects individual rights and prevents injustice; it also rewards and encourages the energetic cultivation of the mind and the intellectual virtues of inventiveness, order, and precision, and promotes in publicly beneficial ways the moral virtues of ambition and industry. These likely consequences were in fact very important to many of the Founders, and their decision to fuel private enterprise was partly based on these hoped-for improvements in character and mind. To be sure, the mind has other and higher objects than inventions, and ambition and industry do not exhaust the moral virtues. Still, a respect for the human mind and an appreciation of efforts to realize its potential are built into our constituting law. One errs to see here only greed and base calculation.

Patent laws serve the public interest at the same time as they protect private rights. The community gains publication, likely development of inventions, a share in the resulting prosperity, and, should it desire it, some legislative hand on the throttle of progress. The patent laws of 1790, enacted by the first Congress, thus established what can rightly be called an ethical-social contract of science in the public interest. In order to secure their rights, authors and inventors had to disclose, that is, make gift to the public of their findings: no protection without publication. (In choosing to promote the widest possible publication, the Founders showed less concern than Bacon for the problem of dangerous knowledge, a matter to which we shall return.) Moreover, the exclusive right was obtained for only a limited period, to encourage prompt development and production of new inventions; thus, society might reap the benefits of innovation more quickly than if the right were of unlimited duration. All in all, the Copyright and Patent Provision and the patent law are most ingenious, public-spirited, and just inventions—themselves worthy of patent protection. Madison praised the former, saying, "The public good fully coincides with the claims of individuals." Abraham Lincoln (in his lecture on "Discoveries and Inventions," February 11, 1859) listed the latter, along with the arts of writing and printing and the discovery of America, among those few inventions and discoveries in the history of the world, most valuable "on account of their great efficiency in facilitating all other inventions and discoveries."

TIME has vindicated these judgments. We are showered on all sides by countless benefits of this far-sighted invention of the American mind, which harnessed science and artful intelligence to the carriage of state and which kept it moving by means of the carrot of self-interest. It would seem hypocritical and, what is worse, ungrateful, to question this arrangement,

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all the more so in the light of the marvelous contributions to our health and prosperity that we can now obviously expect from the industrial exploitation of learning how to get microorganisms to do our manufacturing.

And yet, honesty compels us to point out certain peculiarities of this arrangement, peculiarities that might eventually give rise to serious difficulties, not only for the union of science and the American polity, but also for each of the partners taken separately. First, it should be observed that the contract formed by the patent law brings together, in stressful if fertile union, certain contradictory, or at least inhospitable, partners and principles: self-interest and common good; monopoly and liberty; the ownership of ideas and the sharability or publicity of speech and thought. The patent law seeks to promote the common good by licensing private interest, thus running the risk of fostering a crass selfishness that in any particular instance might sacrifice public interest to private gain and that eventually renders men generally indifferent, or even hostile, to the common good. It seeks indirectly, by means of progress and prosperity, to safeguard political liberty, but it does so by legitimating monopoly—albeit of limited duration—which is the antithesis of liberty. It rewards publication and, therefore, presupposes the sharability of thoughts and ideas, yet it does so by licensing the private ownership of these works of the mind.

Second, there is the already noted built-in tension between progress and stability. Indeed, the very idea of a patent law is something of an oxymoron: it is a hybrid of two opposing principles, change and order, that live always in tension with each other. Law as law stands for order and stability. It not only sets limits and restrains undesirable conduct. It also embodies our opinions, albeit our variable opinions, about what is just and good. Though subject to change, law as such points to what is permanent. A law to encourage progress is thus, at bottom, a paradoxical law. In a way, though it promotes change, as an expression of *legitimacy* the patent law still, at least formally, accords primacy to order. Absent such a law, innovation would lack legal protection and even legitimacy. Thus, the supremely ingenious invention of the patent law could not itself be patentable, due to an absence of law.

In principle, the Constitution goes further than this formal subordination. The constitutional Patent Provision, we have suggested, maintains a balance by *subordinating* progress to the unchanging, *substantive* goals of justice and liberty. But *in practice*, the patent law threatens to tip the scale in favor of runaway change. Increasingly encouraged, the horses of technological progress break into full gallop, seemingly out of anyone's control, and the community is left with the difficult task of adjusting after the fact to the paths traveled and the changes wrought. Sometimes, when progress comes before the bar—as in the present case—even learned men judicially charged with upholding the law choose instead injudiciously to redefine it, in order to keep pace with novelty.

Finally, there are potential strains in the American polity's contract with science, insofar as the polity accepts without reservations the methods, principles, and purposes of modern natural science. For example, the practice of experimentation, when extended to human subjects, often places science on a collision course with the rights of individuals. Worse yet, our fundamental political principles, the *natural* rights enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, acquire no support from the "nature" described by the laws of physics and chemistry. The "nature" of the physicists, to say the least, offers no ground for rights, let alone for the belief that we have these rights as endowments from our Creator. Further, in biology, the teachings of evolution seem to deny to human beings any special place in the whole. And when, encouraged by these teachings, the project to relieve man's estate through mastery and possession of nature approaches making fundamental alterations in human nature itself, Americans—everyone—must begin to wonder whether the goals and presuppositions of the entire venture are sound and even whether modern science's notions of knowledge and nature are simply and unqualifiedly true.

Curiously, the recent Supreme Court decision in the *Chakrabarty* case points up all these difficulties, notwithstanding the narrow question it decided and the limited character of its holding. Various commentators have raised broader questions about the meaning of the *Chakrabarty* decision and its consequences: questions about the desirability of genetic engineering, about the dangers of the further commercialization of science, and about the propriety of owning an entire living species. By examining each of these questions, we shall be led to discover some of the limitations of the contract between modern science and the American polity, as it is embodied in our patent law.

III

First: does the protection of private rights and interests in new discoveries and inventions always serve the public good? Is the awarding of patents always in the public interest? The answer to these questions necessarily turns, in any given case, on the nature of the particular discovery and invention. More generally, it turns on the question, Is progress or technical innovation always in the public interest? If the innovations are simply or largely beneficial, their encouragement through award of patents would still reflect harmony between private interest and common good. But what about dangerous discoveries and inventions? Does the community serve its best

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interests when it stimulates their development through patent grants? Might not even the publication of the existence of the dangerous invention prove harmful to the public interest? What is the American polity's remedy for this problem of dangerous innovation?

Genetic engineering is regarded by many as just such a dangerous technology, and one posing no ordinary dangers. For in *human* genetic engineering, the previous beneficiary of the power to alter nature becomes himself *subject* to that power and those alterations. The power to engineer the engineer sharply raises questions about the meaning and limits of progress.

It was, I am sure, concerns about the dangers of genetic engineering, especially human genetic engineering, that gave the *Chakrabarty* case such wide interest. In argument before the Supreme Court, grave risks allegedly associated with genetic manipulation were cited as a reason why patent should be denied. The majority opinion states:

> We are told that genetic research and related technological developments may spread pollution and disease, that it may result in a loss of genetic diversity, and that its practice may tend to depreciate the value of human life.

These opinions were advanced and are held by reputable scientists, among others, whose concerns range from fears about new biohazards to doubts about our possessing the wisdom requisite to redesign human genes or to interfere designedly in the course of evolution. There is, to be sure, much disagreement about the degree to which these fears and doubts are warranted, but there is no doubt that the matters at stake are serious. The Court indeed acknowledged the seriousness of such considerations, but held them nonetheless irrelevant to its decision, partly on the ground that its negative decision would not prevent such research, partly on the ground that it lacked the competence or the constitutional authority to decide how much and what kind of genetic research our society should foster.

The Court's judgment seems to me to be sound. Under our Constitution, it is for the legislature to decide such questions, and the Courts ought not to rewrite the rules. Further, denial of individual patent applications seems a poor way for society to decide questions about allegedly dangerous research and technology. Yet this very fact calls attention to a defect in the relation between science and society, insofar as that relation is largely defined by or exemplified in the contract of the patent laws. The patent laws assume that innovations proposed by inventors are, *because* innovative and useful to *some*, simply good for the community at large. Instituted well before many people recognized the communal price everyone pays for certain kinds of technological change, they reflect a once little-questioned faith in progress. Thus, as they are instruments for encouraging innovation, they are poorly designed for regulating or controlling it. It is no surprise that the mechanism for making the individual horses run turns out to be incapable of slowing them down, should one later discover that, as a team, they are in danger of running away with the rider.

And yet one wonders. The Court says, "Whether respondent's claims are patentable may determine whether research efforts are accelerated by the hope of reward or slowed by the want of incentives, *but that is all*" (emphasis added). But that "all" is not nothing. True, something unpatentable could still be legal and profitable; one cannot assume that lack of a patent will prevent development. Nevertheless, the awarding of patents *is* a communal hand on the throttle, a gentle hand to be sure, but by no means ineffective. Further, it is, as it happens, a hand less threatening to science than the legislative power to prohibit and make illegal. Moreover, one might argue that, in the statutory criterion of *utility*, the Patent Office has been given the power, indeed the duty, to judge the social merits of a given invention in deciding whether to encourage its development. According to the patent laws, only *useful* inventions may be patented, and rightly so, if some usefulness to the public good is society's share of the patenting contract. Though it is generally sound to believe that fueling private incentives serves the public good, allowing the market to decide "usefulness," this is notoriously not always the case (especially if by "public good" we mean more than economic growth).

How does the Patent Office understand "the useful"? In general, its presumption being to favor development, any definable "use" is sufficient. But is this always sound? How should it judge the usefulness of a manufacture that has obvious and likely misuses and abuses, along with some clear and well-defined use? Fór example, how should it judge the usefulness of a perfected pleasure drug, admittedly beneficial in the treatment of depression, but almost certainly subject to widespread social or political abuse? What about improved devices for subliminal advertising? Or new and improved miniature recording and photographic devices that would no doubt increase snooping and invasions of privacy? Should the inventor of selective spermicides and his financial backers be able to decide by patenting that our society should be able to practice sex-selection of offspring?

One would think that a well-developed and nuanced doctrine of "utility" might already be embodied in court decisions involving patent claims. But a brief survey of the legal literature shows otherwise. True, precedent denies patentable "utility" to inventions whose contemplated use is for purposes deemed illegal or immoral (bogus coin detectors for slot machines,

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for example) or which always cause bodily harm to the user when used in the intended manner (for example, a drug effective against depression but toxic to the point of lethality). "A composition *unsafe* for use by reason of *extreme* toxicity *to point of immediate death* under *all* conditions of its *sole* contemplated use in treating disease of human organisms would not be 'useful' within the meaning of patent laws" (emphasis added) is the limited, almost grudging, concession to such considerations made by the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, in a well-known case, *Application of Anthony*. In that case (1969), the Court in fact argued that, short of such uniform catastrophe, safety as an ingredient of utility is a relative matter, and overruled the U.S. Patent Office which had denied patent for an anti-depressant drug, Monase, a drug voluntarily taken off the commercial market by its manufacturers because of a dozen fatalities reported among its many users.

Commenting in a footnote on the more general question of social harm from inventions capable of affecting public morals, health, and order, the Court in *Anthony* endorses a turn-of-the-century U.S. Circuit Court opinion (*Fuller* v. *Berger et al.*): an invention is "useful within the meaning of the law, if it is used (or is designed and adapted to be used) to accomplish a good result, though in fact it is oftener used (or is as well or even better adapted to be used) to accomplish a bad one."*

During the 1960's this doctrine—that likely abuse does not negate use—caused some embarrassment to the Patent Office, indeed, as a consequence of its function as publicist. A patent had been earlier awarded for LSD, shortly before its hallucinogenic properties were known. When the drug found its way into street use, the Patent Office helped a whole generation learn how to manufacture it, being obliged to divulge the details of its chemical synthesis to anyone who requested them. The Patent Office did so until the supply of printed matter about LSD was exhausted.

Perhaps such precedents reflect our long-standing and naive belief in the beneficence, or at least the innocence, of all innovation. Would a similar court today allow a patent for Monase, for the Colt revolver, or for LSD? Perhaps the future might bring us a more complex and refined doctrine of *utility*, one which was willing to make balancing judgments in protecting the public's side of the contract. But, at least for now, it seems that any licit and non-lethal "use" suffices for the statutory test of "utility," all likely abuses notwithstanding. Under these circumstances, our second thoughts confirm our first: the Court in *Chakrabarty* was right in not allowing concerns about the possible dangers of genetic engineering to influence its decision.

If patent decisions do not and cannot consider these broad questions of use and possible abuse, if restriction of patents is an inappropriate mechanism for setting the pace in the realm of potentially dangerous technologies, the contract between science and society needs additional clauses. To be sure, many already exist—e.g., Regulations of the Food and Drug Administration, Guidelines for the Use of Human Subjects in Research, etc. Yet most of these regulations deal only with questions of health and safety. We have few means of assessing and regulating with regard to the massive consequences of new technologies to our mores, institutions, and ways of life. With the vast powers, now being accumulated, that would bring the mastery of nature to bear on human nature itself, some have begun to wonder whether the simply permissive contract between innovators and society needs to be renegotiated.

Such a response seems to me excessive. We have, and will continue to have, a commitment to scientific and technological progress. We have reason to

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* The court opinion quotes at length from the still authoritative doctrine, formulated in his 1880's textbook of patent law by Albert Henry Walker, the court's own additions to his text being noted by parenthesis:

> An important question, relevant to utility in this aspect, may hereafter arise and call for judicial decision. It is perhaps true, for example, that the invention of Colt's revolver was injurious to the morals, and injurious to the health, and injurious to the good order of society. That instrument of death may have been injurious to morals, in tending to tempt and to promote the gratification of private revenge. It may have been injurious to health, in that it is very liable to accidental discharge, and thereby to cause wounds, and even homicide. It may also have been injurious to good order, especially in the newer parts of the country, because it facilitates and increases private warfare among frontiersmen. On the other hand, the revolver, by furnishing a ready means of self-defense, may sometimes have promoted morals and health and good order. By what test is utility to be determined in such cases? Is it to be done by balancing the good functions with the evil functions? *Or is everything useful within the meaning of the law, if it is used (or is designed and adapted to be used) to accomplish a good result, though in fact it is oftener used (or is as well, or even better, adapted to be used) to accomplish a bad one?* Or is utility negatived by the mere fact that the thing in question is sometimes injurious to morals, or to health, or to good order? The third hypothesis cannot stand, because if it could, it would be fatal to patents for steam engines, dynamos, electric railroads, and indeed many of the noblest inventions of the nineteenth century. The first hypothesis cannot stand, because if it could, it would make the validity of the patents to depend on a question of fact to which it would *often* be impossible to give a reliable answer. The second hypothesis is the only one which is consistent with the reason of the case, and with the practical construction which the courts have given to the statutory requirement of utility. (Emphasis added.)

Does the doctrine of utility enunciated in the emphasized passage truly serve the public interest? Are Walker's three options exhaustive? And is not even the first hypothesis, as stated, a plausible principle for at least those cases in which it would *not* be impossible to give a reliable answer to the balance between benefits and harms to the general welfare?

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expect that the social and political results of such progress will continue to be largely beneficial, and that the union of science and politics cemented by the patent laws will continue to serve us well. It would be foolish to dismantle our instruments of progress just because they require some additional devices and mechanisms. It would be foolish to shackle our accelerator just because it does not function as a brake. The difficult question—one which we have only begun to face—is what kinds of political arrangements and institutions are best suited to reviewing the direction and pace of certain "dangerous" developments and to applying the brakes, if necessary. One thing seems clear: the responsibility lies with the legislature. Courts may raise questions about the need for brakes, but it must be Congress that applies them. How to do so is, of course, the difficult question. The task of inventing suitable braking mechanisms will require even more ingenuity than the invention of the patent laws. We are all aware of the serious risks and costs of governmental regulation. Yet unless some means of control are found *for those technologies reasonably regarded as potentially dangerous to the public interest*—and, for the long run, who can be certain about genetic engineering?—the motives of gain, when added to ingenuity and stimulated by patent protection, are likely to subvert the common good. With big money fanning the flames—consider the difficulties in regulating the tobacco or automobile industries—the fire of innovation could be out of control before anyone gets warm enough to worry.

WE HAVE argued that the job of brakeman does not belong to the Courts. But it does not follow that the Courts should be free to remove or revise brakes applied by the legislature. The Court should be neither the partisan nor the opponent of progress; it is, instead, the guardian of law and, implicitly, a teacher of law-abidingness. The Court in *Chakrabarty* rightly resisted encroaching upon the legislative domain in refusing to become society's arbiter regarding genetic engineering; but how well did it discharge its own task of guarding the law? An examination of the decision reveals that the Court showed itself partial to progress, with the so-called conservative members leading the way.

The Court was asked to decide not whether living organisms *ought* to be, but only whether they *are* patentable matter, as this is defined by statute. The relevant portion of the patent law (32 United States Code §101) provides:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the condition and requirements of this title.

To decide affirmatively, the Court majority had to construe both the novel microorganism and the operative clause in the statute, which defines patentable matter as "any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter," such that a living bacterium could be understood to be either a "manufacture" or a "composition of matter" or both; the Court minority argued that "manufacture" or "composition of matter" were not intended by Congress to encompass living organisms. Though the majority opinion does not directly *argue* that the microorganism in question is, say, a composition—i.e., a putting together—of matter, it treats its aliveness as irrelevant to its patentability. It ignores altogether the nature of the object, arguing: "In choosing such expansive terms as 'manufacture' and 'composition of matter,' modified by the comprehensive 'any,' Congress plainly contemplated that the patent laws would be given wide scope." Finally, the Court argues that novelty, utility, and the fact that Chakrabarty's discovery "is not nature's handiwork but his own" render the bacterium patentable subject matter and Chakrabarty and General Electric the proud owners of "his" new species.

I happen to think the Court opinion mistaken in its reading of the statute. The terms "manufacture" and "composition of matter" go back to Jefferson's 1793 patent law, and Congress has retained them without change in all subsequent revisions. (In another category of patentable matter, when Congress became dissatisfied with Jefferson's concepts, it replaced his term: the present "process" is a replacement for Jefferson's "art.") Did Jefferson regard a living organism as a mere "composition of matter"? Certainly, in the ordinary sense of these terms, no one should. The majority goes too far in extrapolating from its correct belief that Congress "contemplated that the patent laws would be given wide scope." It sustains the opinion that Congress intends statutory subject matter to "include anything under the sun made by man." But if so, why did Congress *in fact* make and preserve categorical *distinctions* among the *kinds* of patentable man-made things—"processes, machines, manufactures, and compositions of matter"—distinctions that would be unnecessary if "anything under the sun," so long as of artificial origin, were the sufficient mark of patentable matter—of course, along with novelty, utility, and non-obviousness? And why, the minority rightly asks, would Congress enact separate plant patent laws (in 1930 and again in 1970) to permit patenting of new plant varieties, if Congress understood "manufacture" and "composition of matter" as broadly as the Court majority now claims? Indeed, as the minority again points out, in the 1970 Plant Patent Act Congress had specifically *excluded* bacteria from patentability under the Act: "Congress has included bacteria within the focus of its legislative concern, but not within the scope of patent protection. . . . Congress, assuming that

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animate objects as to which it had not specifically legislated could not be patented, excluded bacteria from the set of patentable organisms."

The Court majority ignored these specific facts about the written statutes. It took its stand instead on what it calls the "broad general language" of the patent laws and on its own construction of the legislative intent: "The subject-matter provisions of the patent law have been cast in broad terms to fulfill the constitutional and statutory goal of promoting 'the Progress of Science and useful Arts' with all that means for the social and economic benefits envisioned by Jefferson." It is an insult to Jefferson to suggest that his friendship for progress made him imprecise and vague as a legislator. He said what he meant and he meant what he said, always careful about his choice of words. Courts would do less mischief if they treated all law and legislatures as if they meant what they in fact explicitly said. The present Court's love of innovation extends to its reading of law. We must wonder whether such "progressive" jurisprudence is not too high a price for progress.

IV

If patenting and the patent laws do not always serve the public or political good, are they simply good for science? As we shall see, this is best understood as a special case of the question, Is practice always good for theory?, and it ultimately invites us to reconsider the purposes of science and of thought more generally. But nearer at hand are questions about science and money.

The *Chakrabarty* decision has prompted discussion about possible corrupting tendencies of the profit motive, not so much for the society at large, but, curiously, for the present practice of biological science, especially in universities. For roughly a quarter-century, biomedical research has flourished, largely funded by the federal government and philanthropic foundations, much of it done in universities. Though *ultimately* interested in the practical benefits, the government, albeit not without frequent prodding by basic scientists, has wisely and patiently supported many outstanding minds in so-called basic research, largely without regard to its *immediate* utility. Progress over the past three decades is simply staggering. Though competition is keen, and there are well-known cases of secretive and even unscrupulous behavior, on the whole the field has thrived on free and cooperative exchange of information and materials, including strains of microorganisms.

Now that new discoveries and techniques in cell biology and molecular genetics have brought these fields fully into the industrial area, many are worried that the profit motive will distort, not to say corrupt, scientific practices. Concerns are expressed for the effects on the behavior of scientists, on the balance in fields of research, and on universities. Warnings are heard about an impending restriction of the free flow of information and a rise of secretiveness, deception, and other unsavory conduct, not excluding espionage. Others are concerned that profits will dictate the direction of scientific research, deflecting the scientific mind from going where it will or should. With several universities, under threat of rising costs and dwindling financial support, already established entrepreneurs in genetic technology, and many fine scientists entering industry in a variety of capacities, often retaining their academic tenure, there is argument that such goings-on in principle violate the spirit and will in practice threaten the purpose of the university.

These are serious and complicated questions which cannot be addressed adequately here. On some matters the concerns seem exaggerated. The rise of industrial chemistry and applied physics has not in itself, it seems to me, corrupted basic research in universities, nor led to undue secrecy or unsavory practices. And in any case, such problems as appear are due more to the large amounts of money involved than to patenting (though the two are not unrelated). For the need to protect profitable discoveries through patent should lead not to secrecy, but to publication (though the *anticipation* of future patent application does lead many into *temporary* secrecy, and reports are now increasing of biologists who, looking to protect *future* patents, have become silent and stingy with new information and materials). Once a patent is granted, for a payment of royalties new information, materials, and techniques are potentially more widely sharable. Moreover, the disdain of many academic biologists for the practical applications of their work can only be regarded as hypocritical, especially considering the hopes of, and their promises to, their public patrons. Academic scientists have for years played upon the public's utilitarian concerns and always promised and even emphasized the probable long-run practical benefits when seeking congressional support to satisfy their own private curiosity. Science, even university science, is, to some extent, a kept woman, and the question sometimes seems to be only who shall keep her and what is her price. Her virtue and her fruitfulness may not suffer further from wedding herself to industry.

But this is no matter for levity; the stakes are very high. There is reason to be concerned about the growth of the academic-industrial complex, but not because industry is corrupt or corrupting or because there is something reprehensible about utility or even money-making. Rather, one is concerned because one knows that universities exist not only to generate useful discoveries and because one suspects that knowledge for the sake of power and utility is not the whole truth about knowl-

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edge, that thought at its best—including scientific thought—seeks truth for its own sake. For these reasons, we can ill afford to be indifferent to the fate and character of university science and to the climate for free and fundamental thought. The remarkable record of American scientists in *basic* discovery in biology is a credit to public support and especially to the university setting, with its great freedom of inquiry and its relative immunity to demands for prompt success or useful results. Here, fundamental thought is frequently stimulated by the collegiality of scholars in diverse areas of inquiry, scholars who are also teachers, somehow still heirs to a great tradition that often gave more than lip-service to the disinterested pursuit of the truth. Professors are often pushed to fundamentals also by their undergraduate students, who are not yet sufficiently "educated" to know that there are some questions one should avoid asking. One wonders how theory will fare if the universities are increasingly drawn to practice. One wonders whether the search for the truth will flourish, should the universities and their scientists try to be increasingly relevant and useful.

THOUGH largely unanticipated by the American Founders, the rise of universities and of science within them has added a new dimension to the original relation between science and politics, a dimension that acquisitive, democratic, and egalitarian regimes very much require. The point was made brilliantly by Tocqueville, in his *Democracy in America*, in the chapter, "Why the Americans are More Concerned with the Applications than with the Theory of Science":

> The higher sciences or the higher parts of all sciences require meditation above everything else. But nothing is less conducive to meditation than the setup of democratic society. . . . Everyone is on the move, some in quest of power, others of gain. In the midst of this universal tumult, this incessant conflict of jarring interests, this endless chase for wealth, where is one to find the calm for the profound researches of the intellect? How can the mind dwell on any single subject when all around is on the move and when one is himself swept and buffeted along by the whirling current which carries all before it?
>
> Not only is meditation difficult for men in democracies, but they naturally attach little importance to it. . . . In democratic countries when almost everyone is engaged in active life, the darting speed of a quick, superficial mind is at a premium, while slow deep thought is excessively undervalued. . . .
>
> Most of the people in these [democratic] nations are extremely eager in the pursuit of immediate material pleasures and are always discontented with the position they occupy and always free to leave it. They think about nothing but ways of changing their lot and bettering it. For people in this frame of mind every new way of getting wealth more quickly, every machine which lessens work, every means of diminishing the costs of production, every invention which makes pleasures easier or greater, seems the most magnificent accomplishment of the human mind. It is chiefly from this line of approach that democratic peoples come to study sciences, to understand them, and to value them. In aristocratic ages the chief function of science is to give pleasure to the mind, but in democratic ages to the body.
>
> . . . It is easy to see how, in a society organized on these lines, men's minds are unconsciously led to neglect theory and devote an unparalleled amount of energy to the applications of science. . . .

On the strength of this analysis, Tocqueville gives this advice:

> If those who are called on to direct the affairs of nations in our time can clearly and in good time understand these new tendencies which will soon be irresistible, they will see that, granted enlightenment and liberty, people living in a democratic age are quite certain to bring the industrial side of science to perfection anyhow and that henceforth the whole energy of organized society should be directed to the support of higher studies and the fostering of a passion for pure science.
>
> Nowadays the need is to keep men interested in theory. They will look after the practical side of things for themselves. So, instead of perpetually concentrating attention on the minute examination of secondary effects, it is good to distract it therefrom sometimes and lift it to the contemplation of first causes. . . .
>
> We therefore should not console ourselves by thinking that the barbarians are still a long way off. Some people may let the torch be snatched from their hands, but others stamp it out themselves.

I do not wish to exaggerate the dangers to pure science or to universities from the new privilege to patent microorganisms, hybridomas, and products of genetic engineering. Nor, unfortunately, are universities or academic scientists today the embodiment of thoughtfulness and disinterested inquiry that Tocqueville rightly argues we so urgently need. But the climate is not being helped by the eruption among scientists and administrators of what must frankly be called greed, nor is it likely to be improved by the continuing growth of the academic-industrial complex. When the president of Harvard University devotes his entire annual address to his Board of Overseers to the theme of "technology transfer"—the translation of scientific knowledge into useful products and processes—and argues that it must become a central task of the university, one has reason to believe that big winds may soon blow the academy off its present course.

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American universities are, for all their faults, precious and precarious institutions. In fact, the present balance within them between the busy and the deliberate, the clever and the wise, the useful and the true, is already tipped so far toward the former that we must be cautious about all further changes that tend to diminish the latter. It should now be evident that my concern for universities and for theory and fundamental thought goes beyond my concern for so-called pure science. The earlier discussion should have made clear the importance of careful and thorough thinking about the relation between science and the American polity and about the implications of our new forays into genetic engineering. Indeed, especially now, when the goal and direction of the scientific project for the mastery of nature seem less clear than ever, and when, despite this confusion about the end, the means are being amassed to affect directly and deliberately all forms of life on the planet, we stand in urgent need of the far-seeking and high-minded reflection about science, ethics, and society which the patent laws, industry, and even such fine institutions as the National Institutes of Health cannot encourage or foster.

But theory is urgent not only because basic research pays dividends in applications, nor even because we need theory to think about whither we are tending. Theory is urgent also because it is in itself elevating and liberating. Thoughtfulness, speculation, genuine inquiry beyond mere problem-solving, philosophical reflection on our condition and our place in the world, in short, *liberal* learning and *liberal* education—and not only the advancement of Baconian learning—are necessary for a truly free people. Liberty, secured by the progress of science and useful arts, would be little blessed if our minds become enslaved in and to the process of serving our bodies.

Once again, the task is to restore the balance, to give weight to the weaker side. And once again, it is difficult to see how and by whom the countervailing forces for liberal learning and philosophic reflection are to be generated and supported, especially now when economic troubles aggravate the natural tendency of modern thought to serve utility.

The task is beyond the competence both of our science, not least because of its anti-speculative self-definition, and of our law. No one would say that the practice or encouragement of philosophical reflection is the business of our courts. But, at the same time, it is sad when the Supreme Court, the closest approximation in the American polity to the rule of thoughtful reason, promulgates ill-considered opinions about weighty matters. For in justifying its decisions, the Court functions also as a teacher, helping to form what become *our* ruling opinions. Indeed, the opinions of the Court are often more important for what they teach than for what they decide. We take one last look at the *Chakrabarty* case, with a view to the Court as teacher.

V

WHAT has the *Chakrabarty* decision accomplished? A rather modest gain for Chakrabarty, a rather sizable boost for the burgeoning hybridoma and genetic-technology industry, but—by means of negative example—a most important lesson, if only we can learn it, about how close we have come *in our thinking*, if not yet in our practice, to overstepping the sensible limits of the project for mastery and possession of nature. This project makes sense only if we fully understand and accept the limited meanings of "mastery" and "possession" and only if we appreciate the nature of living nature and our place within it. On these deep matters, the Court was here a teacher of shallowness.

Consider first the implicit teaching of our wise men, that a living organism is no more than a composition of matter, no different from the latest perfume or insecticide. What about other living organisms—goldfish, bald eagles, horses? What about human beings? Just compositions of matter? Here arise deep philosophical questions to which the Court has given little thought; but in its eagerness to serve innovation, it has, perhaps unwittingly, become the teacher of philosophical materialism—the view that all forms are but accidents of underlying matter, that matter is what truly *is*—and therewith, the teacher also of the homogeneity of the given world, and, at least in principle, of the absence of any special dignity in all of living nature, our own included.

A similar teaching is also implicit in the enlargement of the sphere of what may be owned and possessed. By the arguments of the Court, it now seems that anything under the sun made of tangible stuff falls under "composition of matter," and is therefore patentable, so long as its origin is in human art. Nothing in the Court's opinion would permit one to argue that the "inventor" of the mule, were the mule to be a new invention, could not claim patentability. If the Chinese succeed in their present attempts with artificial insemination to cross-breed a human being with a chimpanzee, producing the novel and useful "humanzee," it would be arguably patentable matter —if the Court sticks to its interpretation and Congress does not act. These examples may be farfetched but they serve to illustrate the point: there is something obviously and immediately disquieting about the human ownership of an entire living species, even one brought into being with the partial aid of art.

This bizarre new prospect, that one man could own—albeit for a limited time—an entire species, does indeed invite us to rethink the reasons why we permit ownership of any animals. There is a

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sense in which the former is but the logical extension of the latter, both instances of the possession and exploitation of living nature for human needs and wants, and this logical extension as limiting case might in fact illuminate problematic aspects of our age-old and familiar practice of domesticating plants and animals. Still, there are significant differences which, though they do not fully explain our repugnance at the notion of owning a species, suggest that our disquiet is not due just to the novelty and audacity of the idea.

If usefulness justifies ownership, it also defines its justifiable limits. Ownership of animals, even of large herds, presupposes the usefulness of *each* animal to the owner. Even when animals are kept for their beauty or companionship, possession is reasonable only on a human scale, that is, on a scale that permits individual appreciation or relation. We do not endorse possession for the sake of possession: the thought of a man buying up and collecting all the world's camels or giraffes or horses is repulsive, though nothing in the law prevents it. To own more of living nature than what one needs for one's own life and livelihood is hard to justify. Even harder is it to justify such monopoly when the sole purpose is to exclude others from similar benefits.

Ownership also carries with it responsibility, not only *for* the living beings but also to other human beings for what the animals inadvertently do. Indeed, living things, unlike true artifacts, have a life of their own and ways that we cannot simply predict or control:

> And if one man's ox hurt another's, so that it dieth; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the price of it; and the dead also they shall divide. Or if it be known that the ox was wont to gore in time past, and its owner hath not kept it in; he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his own. (*Exodus* 21: 35-36)

Can one exercise responsibility for an entire species, especially species that reproduce prodigiously and are hard to confine? If one of Chakrabarty's bacteria escaped from his laboratory, can he be held responsible for the mischief it causes? If Chakrabarty's bacteria find their way into an oil well or an oil-storage tank, shall he pay drop for drop? For they were wont to gore in time past and the owner hath not kept them in. And (while thinking about fugitive bacteria) if one of Chakrabarty's technicians going on vacation inadvertently carries—on his skin or clothing or in his digestive tract—one of the microbes from its laboratory confinement in Illinois to freedom in Missouri where it becomes fruitful and multiplies, must all the billions of progeny be returned to Illinois? Will the Supreme Court, in upholding Chakrabarty's patent claims of ownership, write a new Dred-Scott decision?

Be this as it may, the implicit teaching about ownership of life in the present Supreme Court decision is indeed problematic. It is one thing to own *a* mule; it is another to own *mule*.* Admittedly, bacteria are far away from mules. But the principles invoked, the reasoning, and the stance toward nature go all the way to mules, and beyond.

What is the principled limit to this beginning extension of the domain of private ownership and dominion over living nature? Is it not clear, if life is a continuum, that there are no visible or clear limits, once we admit living species under the principle of ownership? The principle used in *Chakrabarty* says that there is nothing *in the nature of a being*, no, not even in the human patenter himself, that makes him immune to being patented: not what he is, but only the "accident" of his non-man-made origin renders man himself a non-patentable organism. If a genetically engineered organism may be owned *because* it was genetically engineered, what would we conclude about a genetically altered or engineered human being? To be sure, in general it makes sense to allow people to own what they have made, because they have artfully made it. But to respect art without respect for life is finally self-contradictory. For human art depends on the human artificer, whose inventive mind depends on his living body, not only to sustain it that he might practice its cleverness, but also because the ends of his artfulness emerge from the inner needs and aspirations of his embodied life.

FINALLY, the exalted and mastering status of human art claims too much and too little for itself. It claims too much because it ignores that art can only put together or alter what natural powers beyond human control will allow. In the present case, our inventor even had nature's active assistance; for it is not strictly true, as the Court claims, that "his discovery is not nature's handiwork, but his own." Chakrabarty did not himself *create* the new bacterium. Rather, he played the matchmaker for a shotgun wedding and the selector of its progeny, while the living organisms did the work. He mixed together plasmids (carrying genes for metabolizing hydrocarbons) *produced* by and isolated from certain oil-degrading bacterial species and incubated them with the hardier Pseudomonas species, which bacteria *all by themselves* incorporated the plasmids. By selecting conditions that would support growth only of the plasmid-containing Pseudomonas hybrid, Chakrabarty obtained "his" novel strain. Though the *process* was—in many senses—"creative" and "his own," the novel organism was not *his creature*.

* The argument should cause us to reconsider the wisdom of permitting ownership even of *plant* species, made possible by the plant patent laws of 1930 and 1970.

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Even in true compositions of matter, that is, when chemicals are placed together to produce a new mixture or compound, nature is commanded only as she is obeyed. The potentialities of given matter may be exploited, but they cannot be artfully created. The laws of nature permit prediction and control of phenomena, but they too are not of our making and cannot be transgressed. One might say, what Nature's God keeps asunder, no man can put together. Man's ability to change nature is, in principle and in practice, always consistent with and limited by nature's unchanging ground.

Ironically, in its pride, human innovativeness also respects itself too little, because it lacks self-understanding. It fails to appreciate its source in the permanent power of mind, given to human beings but not of their own making. Our inventiveness is not our invention; neither are the truths it discovers.

The Court acknowledges that "Einstein could not patent his celebrated law that $E=mc^2$; nor could Newton have patented the law of gravity." The reason given is curious: "Such discoveries are manifestations of . . . nature, free to all men and reserved exclusively to none." The Court fails to appreciate the deeper reason why a truth cannot be patented. Once it is published, it is sharable. To know it is to make it "your own." But truth is "your own" in a very special way, unlike your other "possessions." The greatest thinkers have understood that truths are neither private nor property, that they *come* unbidden to mind, mysteriously, and that insight is neither at one's disposal nor of one's own making. Homer, the greatest of the makers, assigns credit to the Muse. Finally, the claim of "intellectual property" is unfounded, even for "inventions."

In the ever-changing being that is given to living organisms, the two poles of natural permanence—mobile matter and sensitive awareness, culminating in mind—are bound together. In human beings, living nature at last becomes conscious of itself. If we are sober in our practice and mindful in our thought, it is given to us human beings to learn our place in the natural whole and to discover something of its distinctive beauty and mysterious ground. Without such self-knowledge, the project for mastery and possession of nature is a Faustian bargain. Reacquiring a respect for our relatives, the ever-changing living forms, could regain for us a much needed recognition and appreciation of the natural and unchanging source of all change.

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My Friend Walter Benjamin

Gershom Scholem

BEFORE I made Walter Benjamin's personal acquaintance, I saw him in the autumn of 1913 at a meeting that took place in a hall above the Café Tiergarten in Berlin. The meeting was held jointly by Young Judea, the Zionist youth organization to which I belonged, and the Youth Forum, a discussion group composed of members of the Youth Movement founded by the German educator Gustav Wyneken. Both organizations recruited their members from the upper terms of the *Gymnasien* in Berlin, and most of Wyneken's followers also were Jews although they were Jews for whom the fact was of little or no practical significance.

At that meeting about eighty young people had gathered to discuss their relationship to their Jewish and German heritages. Each side presented two or three speakers; the main spokesman of the Wyneken people was Walter Benjamin, who was rumored to be their most gifted intellect. He made a very tortuous speech in which he did not reject Zionism outright but somehow relegated it to a secondary position. I cannot recall the details of the talk, but I shall never forget his manner of presentation. Without looking at the audience, he delivered his absolutely letter-perfect speech with great intensity to an upper corner of the ceiling, at which he stared the whole time. I do not recall the rejoinder made by the Zionists.

The Youth Forum was a meeting place for secondary-school and university students who were particularly disappointed by the institutions of "higher learning" and who actually aimed for much more profound intellectual revolutions. It not only espoused the ideas of radical educational reform but also stood for an autonomous youth culture, with Gustav Wyneken's recently published *Youth Culture* as its classic text. These ideas were propounded with much passion by the periodical *Der Anfang* ("The Beginning"). It was generally known that the most important essays were written by students like Benjamin, who wrote under the name Ardor. The Zionists, with their keen historical consciousness, had little use for the radically ahistorical stance of *Der Anfang*. The sociological orientation prevalent today in related undertakings of revolutionary youth was lacking in the groups around *Der Anfang*; "youth" as such seemed to constitute for them the guarantee of a new dawning of creation.

I did not know it when I first heard him speak, but Benjamin by that time already had participated in several intensive discussions about Zionism, both orally and in writing, in 1912 and 1913.

By the time I met him, all this was past history. The start of World War I had put an end to the activities of the Youth Movement. I was then in my first semester as a university student, taking courses in mathematics and philosophy, while outside the university I studied Hebrew and the sources of Jewish literature with at least as much intensity. At the end of June 1915 I heard a lecture by Kurt Hiller, whose book *The Wisdom of Boredom* I had read. Following in Nietzsche's footsteps, so to speak, Hiller in his lecture vehemently denounced history as a force that was inimical to life and spirit alike. His argument seemed totally inadequate and wrongheaded to me. History? Nonsense! We live without history; what has all the rubbish of the millennia to do with us? We live with the generation that was born with us! Thus did I summarize the substance of Hiller's talk in my diary. At the end of the lecture it was announced that there would be a discussion of Hiller's remarks the following week. I went there, along with many other participants, and stood up to protest—albeit rather clumsily—against Hiller's concept of history, thus incurring the displeasure of the chairman, a friend of Hiller's. When I faltered at one point, he simply cut me off. Benjamin also made some remarks, and again I was struck by his characteristic way of speaking. In fact, those mannerisms probably arose because of his pronounced myopia, which made it difficult for him to focus on moving groups.

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A few days later I entered the catalogue room of the university library and found myself face to face with Benjamin, who looked at me intently, as though trying to remember who I might be. He left the room then but came back a short while later, made a perfect bow before me, and asked whether I was the gentleman who had spoken at the Hiller discussion. I said I was. Well, he wanted to speak with me about the things I had said, and asked me for my address. On July 19, I received the following invitation: "Dear Sir—I should like to ask you to visit me this Thursday around 5:30." Later I received a phone call changing the invitation to Wednesday.

Thus I visited Benjamin for the first time on July 21, 1915. He lived with his parents in the Grunewald section of Berlin, at Delbrückstrasse 23, on the corner of Jagowstrasse (today Richard-Strauss-Strasse). He had a large, very respectable room with many books, which struck me as a philosopher's den. At once he proceeded *in medias res*. He told me that he occupied himself a great deal with the nature of the historical process and had also been reflecting on the philosophy of history; that is why my remarks had interested him. He asked me to explain to him what I had meant by my statements in opposition to Hiller. Thus we were soon discussing the things that especially concerned me in those years—namely, socialism and Zionism. At that time I had already been in the Zionist camp for four years, having been led there by my recognition of the self-deception practiced by my family and the circles in which they moved, as well as by my reading of several works on Jewish history, particularly Heinrich Graetz's *History of the Jews*. In those days I read a great deal about socialism, historical materialism, and above all anarchism, with which I was most in sympathy.

I had undertaken to unite the two paths of socialism and Zionism in my own life and presented this quest to Benjamin, who admitted that both paths were viable. Of course, like every Zionist in those days, I also was influenced by Martin Buber, whose *Three Addresses on Judaism* (1911) played a large part in the intellectual world of Zionist youth—something I hardly can understand sixty years later. Even in our first conversation Benjamin expressed strong reservations about Buber, and so struck a very responsive chord in me, because I had been particularly outraged over the positive stance Buber and his main disciples had taken toward the war. Thus Benjamin and I inevitably came to discuss our attitudes toward the war. I told him I shared the viewpoint of Karl Liebknecht, who had voted in the Reichstag against war credits since the end of 1914. When Benjamin said that he fully shared this standpoint, I told him my own story. In February 1915, I had joined a group of like-minded members of Young Judea in writing a letter of protest against the inclusion of militant articles in the *Jüdische Rundschau* (Jewish Review), the organ of the Zionists in Germany. In our letter to the editor we had outlined our own position in regard to the war, but of course under the prevailing military censorship there was no chance that this attitude would be given public expression. Copies of this letter did circulate, however, and one came to the attention of several of my fellow students. They informed the administration, and I was forced to leave school a year before graduation. Since the beginning of that year I had joined my brother in attending the clandestine meetings that the Social Democratic pacifists held in a Neukölln restaurant: at these meetings, as I recall, the major leaders of the opposition reported on the domestic situation every two weeks.

Benjamin was extraordinarily taken with all this, and my reports interested him greatly. He was eager to be active at once in this opposition group in some way. I invited him to come to see me on the following day and said I would show him some of their publications, particularly the first (and only) issue of *Die Internationale*, the periodical edited by Rosa Luxemburg and August Thalhaimer; my brother and I had participated in its illegal dissemination. All in all, our first conversation that evening lasted more than three hours.

THE FIRST thing that struck me about Benjamin—indeed it was characteristic of him all his life—was that he never could remain seated quietly during a conversation but immediately began to pace up and down in the room as he formulated his sentences. At some point, he would stop before me and in the most intense voice deliver his opinion on the matter. Or he might offer several viewpoints in turn, as if he were conducting an experiment. If the two of us were alone, he would look me full in the face as he spoke. At other times, when he fixed his eyes on the most remote corner of the ceiling (which he often did, particularly when addressing a larger audience), he assumed a virtually magical appearance. This rigid stare contrasted sharply with his usual lively gestures.

I have already mentioned his appearance. No one would have called Benjamin handsome, but there was something impressive about him, with his unusually clear, high forehead. Over his forehead he had rather full, dark brown hair, which was slightly wavy and hard to manage; later it turned gray, but he kept it to his end. Benjamin had a beautiful voice, melodious and easily remembered. He was an excellent reader and read very effectively when his voice was calm. He was of medium height, very slender then and for some years to come, dressed with studied unobtrusiveness, and was usually bent slightly forward. I don't think I ever saw him walk erect with his head held high. There was something unmistakable, deliberate, and groping about his walk, probably due at least in part to his nearsightedness. He did not

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like to walk fast, and it was not easy for me, who was much taller, had long legs, and took big, quick steps, to adapt to his gait when we were walking together. Very often he would stop and go on talking. He was easy to recognize from behind by his peculiar gait, which became even more pronounced over the years. Under his forehead one immediately noticed his strong eyeglasses, which he frequently would remove during a conversation, revealing a pair of striking, dark blue eyes. His nose was well proportioned, the lower part of his face still very gentle at that time, the mouth full and sensuous. In its as yet incomplete development the lower half of his face contrasted with the upper, which was severe and expressive. When he spoke, his face assumed a strangely reserved, somewhat inward expression. Except for the rather full mustache Benjamin invariably wore, his face was always clean shaven and slightly pink in color; otherwise his skin was absolutely white. His hands were beautiful, slender, and expressive. Taken as a whole, his physiognomy was definitely Jewish, but in a quiet, unobtrusive way, as it were.

From the first, Benjamin's markedly courteous manner created a natural sense of distance and seemed to exact reciprocal behavior. This was especially difficult in my case, since by nature I tended to be anything but polite; I had been somewhat notorious since my youth because of my provocative deportment. Benjamin had nothing of the rough, flippant manner affected by most Berliners, which I had experienced often enough in my relations with childhood friends. He was probably the only person toward whom I was almost invariably polite. To be sure, in one sense I was his equal in my conversations with him. Benjamin chose his words carefully, but his speech was unpretentious and unostentatious; now and then he would lapse into the Berlin dialect with which he was not completely comfortable—not very convincingly and more by way of mimicry. He had been born and raised in the old western section of Berlin where the dialect had undergone corruption, whereas I came from Old Berlin, which meant that its dialect and mannerisms were natural to me. When we were not discussing philosophy or theology, I liked to slip into pure *Berlinisch*, which I knew better than he. To my surprise, Benjamin would listen attentively and with good humor. When it came to speaking High German, however, I was distinctly inferior. In the course of time his speech greatly influenced me, and I adopted a good number of his mannerisms. His highest praise in those years was the word *ausserordentlich*, "extraordinary," which he always pronounced with a particular intonation. A favorite critical term was *objektive Verlogenheit*, "objective mendacity." At that time he never used Jewish expressions; only later, under his wife Dora's influence and mine, did he begin to employ them.

When I met Benjamin he had just turned twenty-three; I was seventeen and a half. His "profile" thus was naturally more developed than mine. I was pursuing a definite direction, whereas he had abandoned his path after the collapse of the Youth Movement, which had meant so much to him, and had not yet struck out on a new one. Neither of us knew clearly what our future would be. Despite all we shared in common, our social backgrounds were quite different. He came from an upper-middle-class family that had known periods of real wealth; I came from the Jewish petty bourgeoisie, which was then on the rise, and was well off but never wealthy. Though we may not have been fully conscious of it, our lives had taken an almost dramatically different course. It was normal enough that the sons of assimilated families should dedicate themselves to the German Free Students' Association, the Youth Movement, and literary ambitions. But that such a son should devote himself passionately to the study of the Talmud even though he did not come from an Orthodox family, and should seek a way to Jewish substance and its historical development, was very unusual even among the Zionists, whose numbers in those years were anything but small.

On Friday evening, August 15, Benjamin invited me for supper. He introduced me to his parents and his sister Dora, who was fifteen or sixteen years old at the time. Earlier he had told me that his relationship with his family was not a happy one. On a later occasion he introduced me to his brother George, who later became a physician and a very active Communist. I never exchanged more than a few polite phrases with him, however. Benjamin read to me four poems from Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* in his translation and in Stefan George's. He read very beautifully but not in the style of George's disciples. In all four cases I thought his translations were George's work; in two instances I was certain that Benjamin's translation was better. I told him about my translation of the Song of Songs, the first version of which I was then preparing. He called his own work child's play in comparison, saying mine was the more difficult undertaking by far.

The conversation then turned to the Bible. He showed me a translation from the 1830's, edited by Leopold Zunz; he thought very highly of its style and said he often dipped into it. I told him that before visiting him I had attended the Friday evening service at the Alte Synagoge, whose strictly Orthodox liturgy greatly attracted me. I related how I had learned Hebrew and was, in fact, still absorbed in its study. When he asked how many hours I had devoted to it, I replied that I had been studying ten to fifteen hours a week—there was no other way to do it. I told him that I was studying Talmud for two or three evening hours twice a week, and this interested him very much. He wanted to know how I was going about it; I

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tried to explain what I found so fascinating about the reading of talmudic discussions. At that particular time a group of six or eight of us were studying the tractate about the drafting of bills of divorcement. I explained to him what form such a halakhic discussion takes: the talmudic rabbis approach a subject from all sides, often on the basis of variously interpreted Bible passages. To my surprise Benjamin said, "It must be something like Simmel's classes, then." At that time I knew hardly any of Georg Simmel's writings (Simmel himself had already left Berlin), and Benjamin's remark stimulated me to read some of them; I did not like them nearly as well as the Talmud, to whose mode of thought they really were closely akin. I commended to Benjamin my teacher Isaac Bleichrode, the very pious, modest, and reclusive rabbi of a small private synagogue association in our neighborhood. This great-grandson of one of the last great Talmudists of Germany at the beginning of the 19th century had a great gift for interpreting a page of Talmud and teaching the Jewish tradition generally. Benjamin sighed and said, "If only there were something like that in philosophy."

I vividly remember the night of October 20-21, preceding Benjamin's reexamination for military service. At his request I kept him company until morning—first conversing for hours at the Neue Café des Westens on Kurfürstendamm and then playing chess and cards in his room on Delbrückstrasse, while Benjamin consumed vast quantities of black coffee, a practice then followed by many young men prior to their military physicals. We were together from 9:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M.

After that night, Benjamin was deferred for one year. I, who had just passed my final secondary-school examination as a special student before a special committee, expected to be called up for military service. As he had planned, Benjamin went to Munich at the end of October. For a long time I did not hear from him. He did not write me again until I had been declared unfit for service by a doctor shortly after my call-up; I had written him early in December about my release and the resumption of my studies. But Benjamin was very worried that the censors might open the mail and was afraid that I might be rash enough to make incriminating political statements. "There is no [censorship] between Berlin and Munich," he wrote me, "yet *every* [underlined twice] bit of *prudentia* is indicated. I beg you to bear this in mind."

II

At the beginning of March 1916 Benjamin informed me that he would return around the fifteenth of the month and that we then could discuss in greater detail the questions I had raised in my letters about Plato (several of whose writings I was reading at the time) as well as the critical observations on mathematics that I had made.

I anticipated great things to come from these discussions and wrote in my diary: "When one has been reflecting about certain matters for a long time, one cannot help be uplifted by the prospect of such inspiring and reverent company. I cannot talk about these things with [Erich] Brauer or anyone else, for that matter; nor can I discuss my Zionist interests with the Zionists—a truly depressing fact for both parties. . . . Instead I have to go to the non-Zionist and non-mathematician Benjamin, who has sensibility where most of the others no longer respond."

When I reflect on what it was we had in common after these first encounters, I can name a few things that should not be overlooked easily. I can describe them only in general terms as a resoluteness in pursuing our intellectual goals, rejection of our environment—which was basically the German-Jewish assimilated middle class—and a positive attitude toward metaphysics. We were proponents of radical demands. Actually, at the universities the two of us did not have any teachers in the real sense of the word, so we educated ourselves, each in a very different way. I cannot recall either of us ever speaking of our university teachers with enthusiasm, either then or later; if we had praise for any of them, they were eccentrics and outsiders —for example, one of Benjamin's teachers, the philologist Ernst Lewy, and Gottlob Frege, whose course I took in Munich. We did not take the philosophy teachers very seriously; perhaps we were too presumptuous in this.

Associating with Benjamin was fraught with considerable difficulties, though on the surface these seemed insignificant in view of his consummate courtesy and willingness to listen. He always was surrounded by a wall of reserve, which could be recognized intuitively and was evident to another person even without Benjamin's not infrequent efforts to make that area noticeable. These efforts consisted above all in a secretiveness bordering on eccentricity, a mystery-mongering that generally prevailed in everything relating to him personally, though it sometimes was breached unexpectedly by personal and confidential revelations.

There were primarily three difficult requirements. The first was respect for his solitude: this was easy to observe, for it was dictated by a natural sense of limits. I soon realized that he appreciated this respect, a *sine qua non* for associating with him, and that it heightened his trust. The observance of the second requirement was particularly easy for me: his utter aversion to discussing the political events of the day and occurrences of the war. The third requirement, that of overlooking his secretiveness, often demanded a real effort, because there was something surprising, even ludicrous, about such secretiveness in someone as sober, as melancholy as Benjamin. He did not like

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to give the names of friends and acquaintances if he could avoid it. When circumstances of his life were mentioned, there frequently was attached an urgent request for absolute secrecy; more often than not this made very little sense. Gradually, but even then only partially, this secretiveness (which by that time others had noticed as well) began to dissipate, and Benjamin began to speak of people without the accompanying stamp of anonymity, at least when he had initiated the discussion. It was in keeping with this aversion that he tried to keep his acquaintances separate; for a time this was more effective with me, who came from another environment—Zionist youth—than it was with those from the same sphere as he, namely members of the German-Jewish intelligentsia.

Added to this was the immediate impression of genius: the lucidity that often emerged from his obscure thinking; the vigor and acuity with which he experimented in conversation; and the unexpectedly serious manner, spiced with witty formulations, in which he would consider the things that were seething within me, as alien as my main concerns—the urgency of my Zionist convictions and the problems arising from my mathematical-philosophical studies—must have been to him. He was nevertheless a very good listener, though he himself liked to talk often and at length. He assumed that the person he was conversing with had a much higher level of education than was actually the case. Whenever I said that I was not acquainted with something, Benjamin went wide-eyed with astonishment. He asked very good and usually surprising questions. In 1915 he could not learn enough about Germany's share in the outbreak of the war, so I obtained for him a few pamphlets that were being disseminated illegally by left-wing Social Democrats, which contained evidence of the warmongering attitude of Austria and Germany. Benjamin was by no means a "pacifist by conviction," as he has been called. His refusal to have anything to do with this particular war did not stem from any pacifist ideology; that simply was not his style. Later we hardly discussed those things. Another thing that was striking about him was his extraordinary sensitivity to noise, which he often referred to as his "noise psychosis." It really could disturb him. Once he wrote me: "Do other people manage to have peace and quiet? I'd like to know the answer to that."

I VISITED Benjamin only twice while he was in Munich. We spoke a great deal about Judaism, and for the first time the question arose whether it was one's duty to go to Palestine. Benjamin criticized the "agricultural Zionism" that I championed, saying that Zionism would have to wean itself of three things: "the agricultural orientation, the racial ideology, and Buber's 'blood-and-experience' arguments." I agreed with him that not only agricultural workers or farmers should be permitted to go to Palestine, rather that it might be all right to have an entirely different occupation. At that time, and for the next seven years, I myself considered going there as a schoolteacher. In the face of Benjamin's critique of Buber I praised the writings of the Zionist philosopher Ahad Ha'am (whom he had never heard of) and some of Ahad Ha'am's essays on the nature of Judaism, which I lent him in a German-language selection toward the end of 1916. Most of all we discussed Buber, whom Benjamin criticized in sharp terms. He was not entirely unjustified when he told me in parting that if I should run into Buber I should hand him a barrel of tears in our names. He said that Buber personally had struck him as a man who lived in a permanent trance, somewhere very much removed from his own self, a "dual ego"; this state was shown most profoundly in an essay entitled *"Das Gleichzeitige"* ("The Simultaneous"), which had appeared in the *Zeit-Echo*. Benjamin was especially harsh in his rejection of the cult of "experience," which was glorified in Buber's writings of the time (particularly from 1910 to 1917). He said derisively that if Buber had his way, first of all one would have to ask every Jew, "Have you experienced Jewishness yet?"

Benjamin tried to induce me to work into an article I was writing a definite rejection of experience and Buber's "experiencing" attitude. I actually did so in a later essay, as Benjamin had greatly impressed me in this matter. What I told him about Ahad Ha'am, on the other hand, especially his view of the role of righteousness in Judaism, made a great deal of sense to him. In this connection he defined righteousness as "the will to make the world the greatest good." We argued about Buber from various points of view. Benjamin said that Buber represented feminine thinking. In contrast to the socialist Gustav Landauer, who once said the same thing about Buber in an essay by way of praise, Benjamin meant it as a condemnation. We also discussed the question of whether Zion was a metaphor; at that time I answered in the affirmative, for only God was not a metaphor, but Benjamin denied it, asserting—and thus leading us into a conversation about the prophets in the Bible—that if one recognized the authority of the Bible one must not use the prophets metaphorically. Finally we read together the speech of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium,* and Benjamin discussed the peculiar doubling of the Greek gods and the curious fact that so many ancient Greek deities (such as Ananke = Necessity) apparently can be transformed directly into an idea. Benjamin read some excerpts from a few pages he had written about Socrates (I made a copy for myself later), in which he propounded the thesis that Socrates was "Plato's argument and shield against myth."

On the next day the conversation turned to Hegel—our first discussion of Hegel that I can recall.

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Evidently Benjamin had read only a few things superficially and was no great admirer of Hegel at that time. As much as a year later he wrote me: "What I have read of Hegel thus far has definitely repelled me." He called Hegel's "mental physiognomy . . . that of an intellectual brute, a mystic of violence, the worst kind there is: but a mystic for all that." Yet he came to Hegel's defense when, during the same conversation, I made some presumptuous remarks about the speculative philosophy of nature, which greatly offended my mathematical soul even as it impressed my mystical soul.

During a discussion of whether Hegel had wished to deduce the world, we turned to mathematics, philosophy, and myth. Benjamin said he was still not sure what the purpose of philosophy was, as there was no need to discover "the meaning of the world"; it was already present in myth. Myth was everything; all else, including mathematics and philosophy, was only an obscuration, a glimmer that had arisen within it. I responded that in addition to myth there was mathematics—until the great differential equation had been found that would express the world, or, more probably, until it was proved that there could be no such equation. Then myth would be justified. Philosophy, I said, was nothing independent, and only religion broke through this world of myth. I denied that mathematics could be part of myth. Benjamin's decided turn to the philosophic penetration of myth, which occupied him for so many years, beginning with his study of Hölderlin and probably for the rest of his life, was manifested here for the first time and left its mark on many of our conversations. In this connection, at this early date, Benjamin spoke of the difference between law and justice, calling law an order that could be established only in the world of myth. Four years later he elaborated on this idea in his essay, "Critique of Violence."

Later I made a detailed, critical study of these conversations since, as I wrote at the time, "If I really want to go along with Benjamin, I shall have to make enormous revisions. My Zionism is too deeply anchored in me to be shaken by anything." I also made this notation: "The word *irgendwie* [somehow] is the stamp of a point of view in the making. I never have heard anyone use this word more frequently than Benjamin." Of course, everything we had been speaking about was closely bound up with his interest in the philosophy of history. We discussed that subject for a whole afternoon, in connection with a difficult remark of his to the effect that the succession of the years could be counted but not numbered. This led us to the significance of sequence, number, series, direction. Did time, which surely was a sequence, have direction as well? I said that we had no way of knowing that time does not behave like certain curves that demonstrate a steady sequence at every point but have at no single point a tangent, that is, a determinable direction. We discussed the question whether years, like numbers, are interchangeable, just as they are numerable. I still possess a record of that part of the conversation, having written in my diary: "Benjamin's mind revolves, and will long continue to revolve, around the phenomenon of myth, which he approaches from the most diverse angles: from history, with romanticism as his point of departure; from literature, with Hölderlin as the point of departure; from religion, with Judaism as that point; and from law. If I ever have a philosophy of my own, he said to me, it somehow will be a philosophy of Judaism."

Benjamin stayed in Munich until about December 20, 1916. There, under the Americanist Walter Lehmann, he had already started his studies of Mexican culture and the religion of the Mayas and Aztecs in the summer semester—studies closely connected with his mythological interests. In these lectures, which were attended by few people and by hardly any regular university students, Benjamin became acquainted with the memorable figure of the Spanish priest Bernardo Sahagún, to whom we owe so much of the preservation of the Maya and Aztec traditions. Benjamin had a brief encounter with Rilke in Munich between the middle of November and December. He was full of admiration as he told me about Rilke's politeness—he whose mandarin courtesy constituted the utmost that I could imagine. Some time later, in Berlin, I saw Molino's big Aztec-Spanish dictionary on Benjamin's desk; he had bought it in order to learn the Aztec language, but he never carried out this project. Remembering Benjamin's accounts of the atmosphere in the lectures, I was impelled to attend Lehmann's course when I went to Munich in 1919. Under his direction I read Aztec religious hymns, and I can still recite many of them in the original.

In Munich, Benjamin could have met Franz Kafka, who gave a reading of his story "In the Penal Colony" there on November 10, 1916. Unfortunately Benjamin missed that opportunity, and I sometimes have speculated on what an encounter between these two men might have meant.

BENJAMIN'S deep, inner relationship to things he owned—books, works of art, or handcrafted items often of rustic construction—was evident. For as long as I knew him, even during my last visit with him in Paris, he loved to display such objects, to put them into his visitors' hands, as he mused over them aloud like a pianist improvising at the keyboard. During the months I am writing about I noticed on his desk a Bavarian blue glazed tile, depicting a three-headed Christ; he told me that its enigmatic design fascinated him. In time he gradually added to his collection various small figurines and pictures, mostly reproductions. Even then a print of Mathias Grünewald's Isenheim Altar-piece hung on the

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wall of his study, where it would remain for many years to come. In 1913 as a student he had made a special trip to Colmar to see the original. His notes from those years often refer to the Isenheim panels; he was overwhelmed by what he called *"das Ausdruckslose,"* their quality of expressionlessness. In the 20's he was apt to offer philosophical reflections as he brought forth a toy for his son. Once he brought along from Moscow a silver dagger over which he launched forth with reflections on terror that were only half ironic. In his room in Paris hung a tattoo artist's large pattern sheet that he had acquired in Copenhagen. He was particularly proud of this item and regarded it on the same plane as children's drawings and primitive art.

In those three months I did not see as much of Benjamin as would have been possible under normal circumstances. From early February on I had major family problems of my own, with the result that on March 1, 1917, I left my parents' home for six months, found lodging with a Russian-Jewish friend in a boarding house on Uhlandstrasse that was inhabited almost exclusively by Russian Jews, and sought to earn a living by giving Hebrew lessons and translating a rather large book from Yiddish and Hebrew. In the meantime Benjamin informed me that he and Dora Pollak were going to be married, and they invited me—the only nonrelative, as I recall—to the family celebration on Delbrückstrasse after the ceremony on April 16.

In the months preceding Benjamin's marriage I occupied myself for some time with the attempt to translate into Hebrew portions of his study of language; this included motifs from our conversations very close to my heart. Benjamin insisted that I read the first pages of my translation to him and Dora so that he might hear how his sentences sounded in the *Ursprache*, as he put it half-jokingly. That period marked the beginning of his interest in Franz Joseph Molitor, the only serious German-language philosopher to study the Kabbalah, having devoted forty-five years to it. Between 1827 and 1857 Molitor published anonymously, as an introduction to a projected presentation of the Kabbalah, four volumes under the memorable title *Philosophie der Geschichte oder Über die Tradition* ("Philosophy of History, or On Tradition"). Although this work quite groundlessly sought to give the Kabbalah a Christological orientation—its author belonged to the liberal wing of the German Catholics—the book is still worthy of attention. I had begun to read it early in 1915, and in our conversations I repeatedly alluded to it; I also told Benjamin that three volumes of the work still were available from the publisher. These were our first conversations on the Kabbalah; at that time I was still far from a study of its sources, but I already felt an obscure attraction to that world.*

During the period from summer 1916 to May 1918, our friendship was cemented steadily and without any setbacks reached its zenith after my arrival in Switzerland where he and Dora were living. After examining and rejecting all other possibilities, particularly that of taking a doctorate under the direction of Karl Joël in Basel, he had decided to work toward his degree in Bern, under Richard Herbertz who was a rather colorless man and for that very reason suited Benjamin. In the meantime I was studying mathematics and philosophy at Jena, where I worked very intensively, spent much time in reflection, and not only wrote Benjamin detailed reports about all that but also plied him with numerous questions. We urged our favorite books on each other. Benjamin not only wrote about such books but also repeatedly sent me lists of books; I tried to obtain them for him at a reduced rate through my father's printing firm, which included a publishing house.

In November 1917, Benjamin sent me a copy of his notes on Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, written that summer, which moved me as much as my response moved him. Owing, among other things, to his complete seclusion and the tenor of his utterances, Benjamin's figure had assumed prophetic proportions in my eyes; this was given expression in letters I wrote at the time to contemporaries in my Zionist circle of friends, as well as in some notes I made. In March 1918, I wrote him a letter in which I compared the six years of his life from 1912 to 1918 with mine, whose focus I found in "learning"—in the specific sense that the word *lernen* has in Yiddish rather than in German linguistic usage. At the same time I sent him the new translation of the biblical Lamentations that I had made, in addition to writing a treatise entitled *"Über Klage und Klagelied"* ("On Laments and Lamentations"). For my birthday Walter and Dora gave me two photos of them in which he looked very serious and she beautiful. I conducted imaginary dialogues with these pictures in Jena, where they stood on my desk.

On January 14, 1918, I was reexamined and discharged from the army "permanently unfit for duty; not to be examined further." This made it possible seriously to consider steps that would lead to my departure for Switzerland. Toward the end of April I received a passport for Switzerland on the strength of a certificate from the district medical officer.

III

I ARRIVED in Bern on the evening of May 4, 1918. Benjamin met me at the station, and we spent a few hours nearby in his apartment on Hallerstrasse. Thus began a long period of intensive companionship and joint studies as well as disturbances, reservations, and arguments.

* See "How I Came to the Kabbalah," by Gershom Scholem, COMMENTARY, May 1980—ED.

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A few weeks after my arrival, our relationship was subjected to heavy strains for the first time, and not for the only time that year. The expectations each of us had set up for this period, each from his own point of view, were excessive. I expected something prophetic of him, a figure that would be absolutely outstanding not only intellectually but morally as well. Above all, however, the basic reason for these tensions was not so much a conflict of ideas (as in our later conversations and letters about Benjamin's turn to Marxism—which Benjamin was later to remember as "fiery arguments") as it was our different characters. This expressed itself in our attitudes toward pragmatic questions concerning the conduct of one's life and our attitudes toward the bourgeois world (money matters, attitudes toward our parental homes, relations with people, and the like). On a number of occasions there were stormy scenes that easily might have ended catastrophically without Dora's loving intercession.

The conflict in which I found myself was a moral one. For me Benjamin's ideas had a radiant moral aura about them; to the extent that I could intellectually empathize with them, they had a morality of their own, which was bound up with their relationship to the religious sphere that at that time was quite clearly and openly at the vanishing point of his thought. Juxtaposed with this, however, in Benjamin's relationship to things of daily life there existed a strictly amoral element that I could not come to terms with, although he attempted to justify it by his contempt for the bourgeois world. Many of his and Dora's reflections on such matters elicited my protest. Thus violent arguments were precipitated on a number of occasions, sometimes quite abruptly, in which we clashed because we made different moral decisions. There was about him an element of purity and absoluteness, a devotion to the spiritual like that of a scribe cast out into another world, who has set off in search of his "scripture." It was a crisis for me when in close contact with him I had to recognize the limitations of this element. Benjamin's life did not have that enormous measure of purity that distinguished his thought. I was too young, and it did not help to tell myself—as I often did—that the same thing could be said of all of us who were unable to extricate ourselves from entanglements in external circumstances and had to pay a price for the fact that, in the confusion of those years, we sought to leave inviolate for ourselves a realm that these circumstances could not penetrate.

It began to be apparent to me that although Benjamin and Dora recognized the supremacy of the religious sphere of revelation (and for me this was still tantamount to the acceptance of the Ten Commandments as an absolute value in the moral world), they did not feel bound by it; rather, they undermined it dialectically, where their concrete relationship to the circumstances of their lives was concerned.

This was first revealed during a long conversation about the question to what extent we had a right to exploit our parents financially. Benjamin's attitude toward the bourgeois world was so unscrupulous and had such nihilistic features that I was outraged. He recognized moral categories only in the sphere of living that he had fashioned about himself and in the intellectual world. Both of them reproached me for my naiveté, telling me that I let myself be dominated by my gestures and that I offended with an "outrageous wholesomeness" that I did not possess, but that possessed me. Benjamin declared that people like us had obligations only to our own kind and not to the rules of a society we repudiated. He said that my ideas of honesty—for example, where our parents' demands were involved—should be rejected totally. Often I was utterly surprised to find a liberal dash of Nietzsche in his speeches. What was strange about all this was that such arguments, no matter how vehemently they were conducted, often ended with particular cordiality on Benjamin's part. After one such tempest, both he and Dora were of an "almost heavenly kindness," and when Benjamin saw me out, he clasped my hand for a long time and looked deep into my eyes. Did he feel that he had carried his heated formulations too far? Was it a desire not to lose the only human being other than Dora who was spiritually and physically close to him in those days?

In those years—between 1915 and at least 1927—the religious sphere assumed a central importance for Benjamin that was utterly removed from fundamental doubt. At its center was the concept of *Lehre* (teaching), which for him included the philosophical realm but definitely transcended it. In his early writings he reverted repeatedly to this concept, which he interpreted in the sense of the original meaning of the Hebrew *torah* as "instruction," instruction not only about the true condition and way of man in the world but also about the transcausal connection of things and their rootedness in God. This had a great deal to do with his conception of tradition, which increasingly assumed a mystic note. Many of our conversations—more than may be perceived from his written notes—revolved about the connections between these two concepts. Religion, which is by no means limited to theology (as, for example, Hannah Arendt believed in writing about his later years), constituted a supreme order for him. In his conversations of the time he had no compunctions about speaking undisguisedly of God. Since we both believed in God, we never discussed His "existence." God was real for Benjamin—from his earliest notes on philosophy to letters written in the heyday of the Youth Movement to his notes for his first projected thesis on the philosophy of language. Although in his Swiss period Benjamin spoke of philosophy mostly as the doctrine of in-

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tellectual classification, his definition, which I took down at the time, extends into the religious sphere: "Philosophy is absolute experience, deduced in the systematic-symbolic context as language." Thus it is a part of the "teaching." The fact that he later abandoned this specifically religious terminology, although the theological sphere remained very close and alive to him, is not in contradiction to this.

SOME weeks we were together every day, at other times at least thrice weekly. Immediately after my arrival Benjamin and Dora suggested that because of housing conditions in the city I move to the little village of Muri, about a half-hour's walk from the Kirchenfeld Bridge on the road to Thun, where they were about to take an apartment. We then lived out there until early August; my room was only two minutes from theirs, and so an extraordinarily active companionship developed.

My first days passed very intensively and festively. My arrival was celebrated by a festive meal two days later, at which Benjamin informed me that he would study Hebrew once he had passed his doctoral examination. Conversations in the field of Judaism, philosophy, and literature were of primary importance to us, and added to these were the reading of poems, the playing of games, or conversations between Dora and me in which she told me about her and Benjamin's life before I had met them. Dora often went to bed early, and then Benjamin and I continued the conversation by ourselves. When we parted on May 10 he gave me the incomplete manuscript of his essay, "Metaphysics of Youth" (written 1913-14), which I copied out in longhand.

Right from the start we spoke a great deal about his "Program of Future Philosophy." Benjamin discussed the scope of the concept of experience that was meant here; according to him, it encompassed man's intellectual and psychological connection with the world, which takes place in the realms not yet penetrated by cognition. When I mentioned that consequently it was legitimate to include the mantic disciplines in this conception of experience, Benjamin responded with an extreme formulation: "A philosophy that does not include the possibility of soothsaying from *coffee grounds* and cannot explicate it cannot be a true philosophy." Such prophesying may be reprehensible, as in Judaism, but it must be recognized as possible from the connection of things. As a matter of fact, even his very late notes on occult experiences do not exclude such possibilities, though more implicitly. Benjamin's sometimes lively interest in experiences with hashish is explainable from this perspective and definitely not from any supposed addiction to drugs, which was quite alien to him and has been imputed to him only in recent years.

In those days he also talked a lot about Nietzsche in his final period. Nietzsche was the only person who had seen historical experience in the 19th century, a time when people "experienced" only nature. Even Burckhardt skirted the historical ethic; his ethic was not the ethic of history but that of historiography, of humanism. At that time Benjamin's statements on philosophy displayed a very clear tendency toward the systematic. Shortly after my arrival I made this notation: "He is sailing full speed into the system." Sometimes he used the terms *system* and *teaching* almost interchangeably. His critical examination of the world of myth continued to belong in this realm, and so did his speculations on cosmogony and the prehistoric world of man. I frequently presented to him my ideas about Judaism and its fight against myth, something I had reflected on a great deal in the preceding eight months. Between mid-June and mid-August in particular we often spoke about these subjects. I suppose it was in those days that we especially influenced each other. Benjamin read to me a lengthy note on dreams and clairvoyance, in which he tried to formulate the laws governing the world of premythical spectral phenomena. He distinguished between two historical ages of the spectral and the demonic that preceded the age of revelation (which I proposed calling the messianic age instead). Benjamin said the real content of myth was the enormous revolution that polemicized against the spectral and brought its age to an end. Even then he occupied himself with ideas about perception as a reading in the configurations of the surface, which is the way prehistoric man perceived the world around him, particularly the sky. This was the genesis of the reflections he made many years later in his essay, "Doctrine of Similar Things." The origin of the constellations as configurations on the sky surface was, so he asserted, the beginning of reading and writing, and this coincided with the development of the mythic age. The constellations were to the mythic world what the revelation of Holy Writ was to be later.

In such endeavors the spectrum of the states between dreaming and waking fascinated him as much as the world of dreams itself. He once explained to me the law governing the interpretation of dreams he thought he had found, but rereading my notes on it shows me that I did not understand it. Although, as far as my own experience goes, he later refrained from interpreting dreams, at least explicitly, he continued to relate his dreams on frequent occasions and enjoyed broaching the subject of dream interpretation. I do not remember his ever contradicting my expression of profound disappointment at Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, contained in a letter I wrote him a few years later. In Muri he told of a dream he had had at Seeshaupt in the spring of 1916, three days before the suicide of his favorite aunt. He said this dream had greatly excited him, and he had spent hours in a futile quest to interpret it.

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"I was lying in a bed; my aunt and another person also lay there, but we did not mingle. People walking by outside were looking in through a window." He said he did not realize until later that this had been a symbolic announcement of his aunt's death. I do not recall whether he explicitly stated that one of the persons who looked in through the window was his aunt herself; that would have made his story plausible.

Another time, following a playfully heated conversation about a Flaubert-inspired "Encyclopedia of Nonsense," he recounted a dream he had had the night before: "There were twenty people there, and in accordance with given subjects they had to line up by twos in order to act out the specific situation. In a magical way the intention made the appropriate garments materialize. Whoever was ready first set the tone for his partner, and whoever portrayed the subject best won the prize." Benjamin said he really ought to have received the prize for "Rejection"; there he had been a little rotund Chinese in blue garments, and his obtrusive partner, who wanted something from him, had crawled up his back. Another couple had performed just as well, however, and so the prize was held over for the next subject, "Jealousy": "I was the woman and lay stretched out on the floor. The man embraced me; I looked at him jealously from below and stuck my tongue out all the way."

In those first weeks we had many more conversations lasting for hours, sometimes until after midnight. Among the things we read was the draft of a new ethics that Ludwig Strauss had sent to Benjamin and me in the form of handwritten copies, which we critically dissected. On a number of occasions Benjamin presented poems of his own, but he primarily read poems by Fritz Heinle, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and August Graf von Platen; about the last-named Benjamin said that he felt a kinship with him.

Like a considerable number of Jews of our generation before Hitler, we did not feel close to Heinrich Heine, and I cannot remember ever discussing Heine's writings with him. Benjamin had read Heine's "The Romantic School" while preparing his dissertation on the idea of art criticism in early romanticism, and he made deprecatory remarks about this work. In 1916, when I first heard of Karl Kraus, I had read his essay, "Heine and the Consequences"; Benjamin was as yet unacquainted with this work. At that time he was studying the prose writings of Friedrich Schlegel, who had always attracted him, in his poetic production as well; in the process he had encountered J. G. Fichte. Fichte, Kierkegaard, and Freud he numbered among the "Socratic people." Much later, in a letter of January 1936 to a mutual friend, he wrote that in Fichte "the revolutionary spirit of the German bourgeoisie had transformed itself into the chrysalis from which the death's-head moth of National Socialism later crawled."

Benjamin never developed a positive relationship to literary Expressionism as a movement, though the movement did originate in the pre-war years in a circle to which Benjamin was personally quite close. He had great admiration, however, for certain phases of the Expressionistic painting of Vasily Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, and Paul Klee. While still in Jena I had obtained for him Kandinsky's "The Spiritual Element in Art"; evidently Benjamin was attracted particularly to the mystical elements of the theory contained therein. But he had little use for catchwords in general and was less attached to schools than to specific phenomena.

This period also marked the beginnings of Benjamin's collection of old and rare children's books. The collection was really launched by Dora's enthusiasm for the genre. Dora also loved legends and fairy tales. She and Benjamin gave each other birthday presents of illustrated children's books until at least 1923, the period of my close association with them, and they particularly hunted for editions in which the illustrations were handtinted. Benjamin showed me Johann Peter Lyser's things with a delight in which the joy of discovery and pleasure at the artistic result were commingled closely. He loved to give little lectures on such books to Dora and me and to emphasize particularly the unexpected associations that these talks brought out in the texts.

Benjamin's predilection for the imaginative world of associations, which was connected also with his profound interest and absorption in the world of the child—an interest that dated from the early years of his son Stefan—was also evident in his marked interest in the writings of insane persons. In Bern he already owned several works of this type. What primarily fascinated him about them was the architectonic (today one would call it the structural) element of their world systems. His interest was not pathologic-psychological but metaphysical in nature. I heard him discuss this on a number of occasions, although never in connection with the technique of psychoanalysis, with which he was at least acquainted through his study of the works of Freud and some of the latter's earliest pupils. His relationship to painting, which I have mentioned already—it extended to include James Ensor long before his discovery by the Surrealists—probably belongs in this context also. He liked to visit exhibitions; this enhanced his great appreciation of art more than reproductions did. In Paris he led me, offering highly appreciative remarks along the way, to such places as the Cabinet des Illusions and also to Madame Tussaud's waxworks, whose unexpected juxtapositions of figures equally evoked his aesthetic-associative delight.

Not infrequently we spent our time together taking walks through old Bern, but more often stayed in his large study, where he had gradually assembled much of his library. But sometimes we

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also took longer trips, for instance a nocturnal hike from Thun to Interlaken in late May 1918. We walked in silence, and when we began to talk, Benjamin soon stopped, since he greatly favored such a change of pace during a conversation. Then we would go on walking as we discussed more or less unimportant things, whereupon we would fall silent and then turn to "essential things" again. This is when I first noticed Benjamin's basic melancholy, the incipient depressive traits that later became more pronounced. (I never noticed anything manic about him.) At the same time I began to grow aware of the hysterical elements in Dora's behavior, which were sometimes suddenly triggered by the most insignificant events. Often enough these tension-laden scenes left me overwhelmed and perplexed, like a man who has seen more than he cares to see.

I had told Benjamin a great deal about the Hebrew writer S. Y. Agnon, whom I had met in Berlin a few months before the Benjamins' wedding. As nothing of Agnon had been translated into German, however, it was hard to convey an idea of this extraordinary human being and his writings to someone who did not know Hebrew. In the spring of 1918, a wonderful German translation of Agnon's "The Legend of the Scribe" appeared in *Der Jude*; I had heard Agnon read it from the Hebrew manuscript in Berlin—an unforgettable experience. I still regard those pages as a high point in Hebrew literature. On a Friday evening in June, I read the translation to Walter and Dora. Benjamin was impressed profoundly, and in a long conversation he rated the first three-fourths of the work among the greatest things he had ever heard, though he raised vehement objections to the visionary ending. He said Agnon had no right to present a vision as the story's crowning point, since it could not surpass the reality of the preceding portions. "If the story *with* this ending is perfect, then I don't understand why there is a Bible. In that case we don't need the Bible." I made him a present of Agnon's story, which I had had bound especially for this occasion.

Benjamin was not only a great metaphysician but also a great bibliophile. The enthusiasm with which he was capable of discussing bindings, paper, and typefaces in those years frequently got on my nerves. Today it is hard for me to reconstruct the impression I received then, but I saw an element of decadence in it. I made this note about it: "Great though [Benjamin's] life may be in every sense—the only case near to me of a life being led metaphysically—it nevertheless harbors elements of decadence to a fearful extent. The way one leads one's life has certain hard-to-define boundaries, which decadence exceeds, and unfortunately this is definitely true in Walter's case. I deny that metaphysically legitimate insights can arise from this way of evaluating books on the basis of their bindings and paper. Walter has a lot of illegitimate insights as well. There's no way to change him. On the contrary: the only thing I have to guard against is the incursion of this sphere into my own through personal contact."

Once the three of us had a long conversation about the Ten Commandments—Dora had asked whether one might transgress them—and the significance of the precepts of the Torah. I read them notes on the concept of justice as "action in deferment": these evoked a strong reaction from Benjamin. They wanted to know why, despite my religious attitude, I did not adopt an Orthodox way of life—a step I have repeatedly considered and have always rejected with mounting determination. At that time I formulated my explanation something like this: for me that manner of life was connected with the concretization of the Torah in a false, premature sphere—as evidenced by the paradoxes of the tricks that become manifest in the process and that are necessarily inherent in such a false relationship. Something is wrong with the application; the orders clash. I said I had to maintain the anarchic suspension. Only later did my historical perspective change—in a direction that disposed of the problem, for my understanding of the sense in which one may speak of revelation had changed. At that time kabbalistic considerations hardly were involved, although I had begun to reflect on them from time to time.

The Bolshevik Revolution and the collapse of Germany and Austria, as well as the ensuing pseudo-revolution, brought current political events into our conversation again for the first time since we had agreed on our attitude toward the war. Between November 9 and 11 we witnessed the general strike, which the Swiss government put down by force of arms, but it hardly engaged our attention, although we did concern ourselves more with the events in Russia and Germany. I was not deeply involved, however. In December I wrote to a friend: "Palestine certainly excites and interests me more than the German revolution." In any case, we had discussions about dictatorship; I represented the more radical point of view and defended the idea of a dictatorship—which Benjamin then still completely rejected—provided that it was a "dictatorship of poverty," which to me was not identical with a "dictatorship of the proletariat." I would say that our sympathies were to a great extent with the Social Revolutionary party in Russia, which later was liquidated so bloodily by the Bolsheviks. We also discussed the question of republic and monarchy, and to my surprise Benjamin opposed my decision in principle in favor of the republic. According to him, such a decision could be made only in relative terms after weighing the prevailing circumstances, and even under present conditions a monarchy might be a legitimate and acceptable form of government.

Benjamin, when confronted with the question of

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political activity, declined to engage in such activity. The Munich Soviet Republic of April 1919 came into his purview only because Felix Noeggerath, whom he highly esteemed as a philosopher, was arrested for participating in it—something that greatly excited Benjamin. He regarded the Hungarian Soviet Republic as a childish aberration, and the only thing about it that touched him was the fate of Georg Lukács; at that time people (mistakenly) feared that he had been arrested and might be shot. In those days Benjamin, who had read only Lukács's pre-Marxist writings, such as "The Metaphysics of Tragedy," and "Theory of the Novel," and thought very highly of them, still regarded the volume of Dostoevsky's political writings as the most important modern political work that he knew.

Around the middle of May I informed Benjamin of my decision to make a radical change in my academic goal and to regard Jewish studies rather than mathematics as the focus of my future efforts. According to notes I made at the time, I had realized that "my true goal is not mathematics but to become a Jewish scholar, to be able to occupy myself truly and completely with Judaism; this would yield a great deal worth the effort. My passion simply lies with philosophy and Judaism, and for this I have a great need for philology." I told Benjamin that I would seek to complete my mathematical studies, which I did (so that I might earn my bread as a teacher of mathematics in a school in *Eretz Yisrael*), but that I wanted to take my doctorate in Jewish studies. In those months I decided to tackle the study of kabbalistic literature and write a dissertation on the linguistic theory of the Kabbalah. For some time I had had some daring ideas on this subject, and I wanted to confirm or refute them in my dissertation. The combination of philosophy, mysticism, and philology on a Jewish theme stimulated all my aspirations. Benjamin reacted very enthusiastically to this decision.

In those months the tensions that had marked our relationship gradually and finally abated. On June 27, Benjamin passed his own examination *summa cum laude*, and that evening we celebrated. Dora was high-spirited and happy as a child, and we told one another nothing but meaningless-meaningful stories about Pappelsprapp, as Dora's fantasy place was called. While Benjamin was preparing for his examination, on May 31 and June 1, he and I had hiked from Biel to Neuchâtel amid many conversations. We had a long discussion on whether his manner of living and mine were the same; he was convinced that they were and I denied it. We also talked a lot about politics and socialism, and expressed great reservations about socialism and the position of the individual if it was ever put into practice. To our way of thinking, theocratic anarchism was still the most sensible answer to politics. At that time I had written a long critique of *Hapo'el hatza'ir* ("The Young Worker"), the Hebrew periodical of the Palestinian "people's socialists," and I had a gloomy presentiment concerning the fate of intellectuals under socialism. "In such an order the intellectual could be conceived of only as a madman"—this sentence in my diary entry of June 29, 1919 I reread with profound horror fifty-five years later.

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Children of Chopin

Samuel Lipman

RECENT history would suggest an inverse relation between a country's economic performance and the amount of official attention paid to its national culture. In the West, for example, the commercial decline of England has gone hand in hand with rising expenditures on the part of the British Arts Council. Part of Italy's response to runaway inflation, political terrorism, and governmental paralysis has been—sending the La Scala Opera on world tours. And whatever the tendency in the democracies, it is as nothing compared with the advanced cultural policies that have by now become a hallmark of the socialist states of Eastern Europe. These countries, despite the diversity of their ethnic makeup, living standards, military power, and degree of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, are all marked by the proud political exploitation of their writers and artists, both living and dead. From books to phonograph records, from tourism to postage stamps, from museum exhibitions to international contests, the achievements of artists are made to seem the achievements of the state which has accorded them display.

Yet the tiger of cultural pride is not an easy mount for governments to ride. The safest aesthetic figures for canonization have always been dead ones; here may be found the reason for the peculiar tendency of revolutionary regimes to encourage the wide dissemination and pedantic study of classical authors who in all cases are the spawn of social systems which the new government has vowed to bury. With living writers, exploitation is more difficult—recent dissident movements have made it clear just how difficult.

Literature, because of its dependence on words, has always posed special problems for tyrants. The visual arts, too, with their intellectually accessible images, can easily be construed as subversive of the established order. Music, however, is a different case, tailor-made for a regime's purposes. First of all, music induces pleasure, on the whole of a passive sort. Then too, musical imagery is non-verbal and non-specific; the reliance on words is only intermittent—and when the words are distasteful, they can be altered, as they have been in Russian opera librettos and East German versions of poetry set by Beethoven. Perhaps most important of all, music, though national in origin, is a symbol the world over of man's higher strivings, his better nature, his struggle for that brotherhood of the spirit which is said to be the goal of a progressive internationalism.

So it is not surprising that the Eastern bloc nations are everywhere the generous patrons of music past and present. The Soviet Union itself is one vast musical museum, with musicians as the curators and government *apparatchiki* as the administrators and overseers. For the Soviets, Beethoven is a socialist hero, admired by Lenin in his day; Tchaikowsky, whose name has been enshrined in the world's most prestigious contest for musical performers, is represented as a father of his people; Rachmaninoff, though a bitter enemy of Bolshevism and a runaway from the workers' paradise, was used to provide background music for Soviet television coverage of Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to the USSR. With the living and the recently dead, Moscow is more careful. But even in the case of the closet apostate, Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75), public respect is accorded to a somewhat suspect memory.

Similar attention is paid in the satellites as well. Romania makes much of Georges Enesco, a cosmopolitan violinist and nationalist composer active from the 1890's to his death in the 1950's. East Germany invests heavily in Bach performance and publication, and floods Europe with appearances and recordings by its state-subsidized opera companies, orchestras, and soloists. Hungary makes a cult of Liszt and Bartók, with countless concerts, recordings, publications, and the inevitable international contests in the composers' names.

THE musical case of Poland—a country so much in the news for other reasons—is of special interest. In that tortured country a relationship has long existed between culture and national feeling. Indeed, Poland's first—and to this day its greatest—musical hero, Frédéric Chopin (1810-49) has been a symbol of his people. Though he lived abroad for most of his life, Chopin was full of national sentiment. Not only did he write perhaps his greatest works in the forms of such Polish folk dances as the polonaise and the mazurka (forms which he both expanded and ennobled), but even the virtuosity of his waltzes and the lyricism of his nocturnes seem suffused more by the introspection and melancholy of the composer's birthplace than by the glittering salon atmosphere of Western Europe where they were written.

Chopin was quite conscious of what we now might call his "roots." According to a story repeated by the American critic James Huneker, the composer, upon hearing the melody which begins the E-major Etude (opus 10, no. 3), "raised his arms aloft and cried out: *'Oh ma patrie!'* " Similarly, it is likely that Chopin wrote his famous "Revolutionary" Etude

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(opus 10, no. 12) in a flood of emotion after being told of the Russian conquest of Warsaw.

As pianists, Poles have specialized in Chopin. The career of Arthur Rubinstein, for example, is synonymous with the received idea of the way this music sounds. Somewhat earlier, Ignace Paderewski proved that it was possible to parlay the keyboard performance of Chopin into political status—as a Polish national representative at the Versailles conference after World War I, and then as president of the reestablished Polish state. It is the name of Paderewski which adorns the official (and now internationally standard) edition of the complete music of Chopin, an undertaking begun under relative freedom before World War II and published—and marketed—under Communism. Finally, when, after the death of Stalin, the decision was taken to increase Poland's cultural contact with the West, one of the first Polish musicians to visit the United States was the Chopin specialist Halina Czerny-Stefańska; she appeared here, predictably, in all-Chopin programs.

As a composer, Chopin had few successors among his fellow Poles. Stanislaw Moniuszko (1819-72) was influential at home as a nationalistic opera composer, but his music failed to travel well abroad. Henryk Wieniawski (1835-80), the author of two violin concerti which have remained in the permanent international repertory, was famous during his lifetime as a virtuoso violinist rather than as a composer. Still, though Polish musical life in the last half of the 19th century was undeniably provincial, the infrastructure necessary for the creation of a more sophisticated music was in fact being laid. The end of the century saw music schools, publishers, concert auspices, choruses, and systematic studies of folk music. The composer Wladyslaw Zeleński (1837-1921) was writing operas and program music; his early concert overture, *In the Tatra Mountains* (1871-72), redeems its academic construction by the heartfelt character of its recognizably Polish melodic contours. More interesting as a composer, and vastly more important as a teacher, was Zygmunt Noskowski (1846-1909). In addition to his symphonic music—some of which, including the symphonic poem *The Steppe* (1896-97), remains deserving of occasional performance today—he taught a whole generation of Polish composers.

CHIEF among Noskowski's students was Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937), the most distinguished Polish composer since Chopin. He was born in Tymoszówka, a part of the Ukraine which had belonged to the kingdom of Poland and was now annexed to the Russian empire. His parents, rural gentry, were Polish nationalist in political allegiance and sophisticated in their aesthetic and literary tastes. His father was Karol's first music teacher; a brother was a composer and pianist; one sister was a gifted singer, a second was a poet, and a third was a painter. Relatives were similarly cultivated. Among them were the Blumenfeld family, one of whose offspring was later to teach the young Vladimir Horowitz in Kiev; another branch, the Neuhaus family, ran a music school at which Karol studied, and one of their sons (Heinrich) became a major musical figure in the Soviet Union and the piano teacher of Sviatoslav Richter.

In 1901, the year of the founding of the Warsaw Philharmonic by the gifted conductor Emil Mlynarski (later the father-in-law of Arthur Rubinstein), Szymanowski came to Warsaw, there to study composition with Noskowski. But however sufficient Warsaw was for musical training, it seemed too conservative and academic to give much of a hearing to new music. So Szymanowski, in the tradition of outsiders the world over, joined with three fellow students in founding a movement, its name and inspiration drawn from the "Young Poland" group in literature.

Szymanowski's collaborators in "Young Poland in Music" were Apolinary Szeluto (1884-1966), Ludomir Różycki (1884-1953), and Grzegorz Fitelberg (1879-1953). Of these, Szeluto amounted to little; Rozycki failed to develop beyond his early promise; Fitelberg became known as a conductor and in that capacity acted as an efficient and dedicated propagandist of Polish music. Fortunately for the good name of the movement, Szymanowski's talent was soon joined by that of Mieczyslaw Karlowicz (1876-1909). This tragically short-lived composer wrote few works—among them a beautiful and unjustly ignored Violin Concerto (1902) and several ambitious tone poems influenced by Richard Strauss. Despite Karlowicz's distinction, however, "Young Poland" in fact has meant only one name, Szymanowski.

His early music, much of it for the piano both as a solo instrument and as a partner for the voice, showed, not surprisingly, the influence of Chopin. That influence seemed especially strong on Szymanowski as it was filtered through Scriabin, the Russian romantic and mystic who managed to communicate ecstasy through the medium of virtuoso piano writing, harmonic fluidity, and rhythmic complexity —all traits which were to become characteristic of the mature Szymanowski as well.

Some attractive melodic aspects aside, none of Szymanowski's better known early music seems especially consequential today. It is a different story with the Second Symphony (1909-10)—a deeply impressive work little performed, at least in this country.[1] Here the musical ghosts of Wagner and Strauss, although clearly lurking in the background, do not compromise the work's orgiastic vitality and harmonic distinction.

THE outbreak of World War I found Szymanowski back in his birthplace of Tymoszówka, cut off by the conflict from the cosmopolitan European world which had influenced his music. Thus isolated, he began to develop his mature style. The first masterpiece to result from this inward turn was *Myths* (1915), a group of three short pieces—"The Fountain of Arethusa," "Narcissus," and "Dryads and Pan"—based on mythological subjects. The first of these, the "Fountain of Arethusa," is as close as Szymanowski ever came to writ-

[1] Fortunately, a new recording of this work, along with the Third Symphony, performed by Antal Dorati and the Detroit Symphony, has been released as London LDR 71026.

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ing a repertory piece. In the hands of his friend and compatriot, the great violinist Paul Kochański, and later of virtuosi everywhere, this tour de force became a staple of celebrity recitals; only the present inclination of performers and audiences to concentrate on the simpler musical language of the 19th century has limited its performance. Throughout the suite as a whole, the writing for both violin and piano is imaginative, the melodic content lush and appealing, and the harmonic language an original combination of French impressionism and Austro-German expressionism.

Masks (1915-16), a complex set, also of three pieces, for solo piano, similarly demonstrated Szymanowski's new compositional mastery. A peculiar mixture of mysticism and mockery, the pieces are a fantastic treatment of the legends of Sheherezade, Tristan, and Don Juan; lush textures and sentimental melodies appear and are broken off, only to be succeeded by renewed gushing. Everything requires the utmost in virtuoso pianism uniting both power and lightness, strength and ease; the desired effect is that of a magical piano playing itself.

The Third Symphony (1914-16) and the First Violin Concerto (1916) are both written to programs suggested by the writings of the Polish poet Tadeusz Miciński. In the case of the Violin Concerto, the poem, entitled "May Night," only serves to inspire the music; as Jim Samson points out in a recent book on Szymanowski,[2] the words nonetheless fit the composer's artistic persona:

> And here by the side
> of the lake
> I stand amidst purple
> blossoms,
> Shedding tears of joy,
> rapture, and terror,
> Burning in the passionate
> conflagration of love.

Just what form that love took in the real world is recounted, in what pass for Szymanowski's own words, in the second volume of Arthur Rubinstein's ever-fascinating memoirs, *My Many Years:*

> "But Arthur: you won't believe it, but . . . I found the greatest happiness—I lived in heaven. I met a young man of the most extraordinary beauty, a poet with a voice that was music, and, Arthur, he loved me. It is only thanks to our love that I could write so much music."

Whatever the composer's physical inspiration, the music of the Violin Concerto is tender, compelling, and toward the end, thrilling.

The Third Symphony provides an example of Szymanowski's growing interest in the Near East and its culture—an interest perhaps not unrelated to questions of sexual expression, as the cases of E.M. Forster in Egypt and India and André Gide in Tunisia may suggest. The words Szymanowski set, a translation by Miciński from the Persian Second Divan by Rumi, are explicit enough:

> Oh do not sleep, friend,
> through this night.
> You a soul, while we are
> suffering through this
> night. . . . .
> Leo, Orion,
> Sagittarius and the
> virgin blood-red gleam
> through this night.
> Saturn binds with fateful
> powers.
> Venus floats in golden
> sail through this night.
> Silence binds my tongue
> with fetters
> But I speak though tongueless in this night.

Judged as music, the symphony is impressive in the context of post-romantic orchestral works, and is a significant advance beyond Mahler. Once again, the infrequency of its performances in this country can only be understood in terms of the present atmosphere of caution in programming.

The First String Quartet (1917) is similarly deserving of greater attention, on the grounds both of its intrinsic worth and the present-day constriction of the chamber-music repertory. This quartet represents a new turn in Szymanowski's music toward leanness and even simplicity; the long-lined melodies point to the composer's increasing concentration on flow and structurally produced inevitability.

Indeed, though he was still a slow worker, Szymanowski now, in his larger-scaled works, was going from strength to strength. The opera *King Roger*,[3] another product of his fascination with exotic cultures, occupied Szymanowski from 1918 to 1924. The plot, set in medieval Sicily, concerns a conflict between Christianity and paganism; the moral of the story is that physical love underlies creative spiritual achievement. As in the case of the Third Symphony, a corporeal program elicited from Szymanowski a powerful score, rich in melody and gripping in impact. The work has been little seen during the more than half-century of its existence; the reason for its neglect is said to be its lack of dramatic stageworthiness.

EVENTS outside Szymanowski's musical world were now of increasing importance in his creative activities. World War I had been fought in the East over Polish lands; the Russian revolutions of 1917 signaled the end of the East European social class which had given him birth and formed his intellectual outlook; the defeat of the Central Powers in the war, combined with the temporary weakening of the Russian state, released a tidal wave of national feeling among peoples unused to the possession of state power. Chief among these peoples were the Poles, proud, embattled, and economically weak. Their national restoration acted as a strong impetus in turning Szymanowski as a composer from cosmopolitan exoticism toward the specifically Polish cultural heritage of which he was so proud. The example of Stravinsky's use of Russian folklore in *Les Noces* (1917-23), following as it did in the barbarous wake of *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913), suggested to him how, in the case of Poland, this heritage might be utilized.

For Szymanowski the most fruitful source of folklore was the culture of Poland's Tatra Mountains. From his home in the resort of Zakopane, he saw himself as part of

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[2] *The Music of Szymanowski,* Taplinger Crescendo, 220 pp., $11.95.

[3] A complete recording of *King Roger,* badly showing its age, has been available from time to time on MUZA (Poland) XL 2050. The best-known excerpt from the opera, "Roxanna's Song," may be heard in a violin transcription, along with a hokey performance of the *Myths,* on Deutsche Grammophon 2531 330.

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the "emergency rescue squad of Tatra culture." He entered into the lives of the local people; wrote about their indigenous music; even included some Tatra fragments at the end of *King Roger*. But the first major use he made of this resource was in the Twenty Mazurkas of opus 50, written in Zakopane in 1924 and 1925. The first four of these are dedicated to Rubinstein, who has recorded them twice in authentic performances, once on late 78's[4] and once, toward the end of his career, on a stereo LP.[5]

As a set, the mazurkas make up one of the most significant works for piano of the post-World War I era. At one and the same time they manage to sound recognizably like the mazurkas of Chopin and still to project a bittersweet originality appropriate to a musical period which accorded folk music an artistic legitimacy in its own right. Here, as elsewhere in Szymanowski's keyboard music, the characteristic sound of the instrument is rich and idiomatic, a testimony not only to the composer's knowledge of the piano but also to his own talents as a pianist.

A commission from the Princess Edmond de Polignac (née Winnaretta Singer of the American sewing-machine fortune) resulted in Szymanowski's "peasant requiem," the *Stabat Mater* (1925-26). Here archaic elements from 16th-century religious music are combined with Szymanowski's individual brand of ecstatic lyricism to produce an ineffably beautiful choral score.

The Second Quartet (1927) is an altogether remarkable achievement, combining the athleticism and clarity of the First Quartet with the lush sonorities which remained Szymanowski's hallmark. The beautiful opening theme, gently undulating in octaves over a rocking accompaniment, contrasts sharply with later passages of folk-derived motives.

As the 1920's wore on, Szymanowski began to achieve a growing reputation both in Poland and abroad. Kochański and Rubinstein were avid performers of his music;[6] Fitelberg conducted his orchestral works widely; Szymanowski himself made tours of the continent, England, and the United States as a pianist playing his own music. This process of increasing public favor continued into the 1930's. *King Roger* was a great success in Prague in 1932, as was his ballet *Harnasie* (1923-31) in the same city in 1935 and in Paris in 1936, where the famous Serge Lifar danced the lead.

The music for *Harnasie* was the most outgoing the composer had ever written, and pointed the way he might have gone had he remained in good health. In *Harnasie* Szymanowski drew again on Tatra material, sometimes explicitly. The brilliant orchestration accentuates the folk elements in something of the manner of earlier Stravinsky. Had it not been for the rapidly approaching European catastrophe, the work might well have entered the international repertory.

For some time Szymanowski had been suffering from a morbid condition eventually diagnosed as tuberculosis of the larynx. He found himself responsible for the support of his mother and much of the rest of his family as well. To make money he wrote in 1932 one of his final pieces, the *Symphonie Concertante* (also known as the Fourth Symphony).[7] Adversity, not for the first time in the history of art, stimulated genius; the work seems a complete fulfillment of everything Szymanowski tried to achieve as a patriotic figure, a romantic inheritor of the 19th century, and a force bringing Polish music into the modern world.

The *Symphonie Concertante* opens with a folk-like melody on the piano, played out against a quiet and tonal orchestral background. A sophisticated listener will immediately notice a strong resemblance to the beginning of the Third Piano Concerto of Bartók (actually written more than a decade later). Throughout its first movement, the *Symphonie Concertante* alternates reminiscences of the opening melody with virtuoso passages pitting the lone pianist against a giant orchestra. The second movement features solo orchestral instruments playing passages of sinuous beauty, accompanied by chromatic figurations in the piano; at the movement's end, the piano and orchestra again restate the initial material of the first movement. The finale, *Allegro ma non troppo, ma agitato ed ansioso* (quickly, but not too much so, but agitated and anxious) is a set of variations in mazurka form, alternating sections of briskness with soulful passages for piano alone. The ending, in traditional fashion for virtuoso instrumental works with orchestra, is tumultuous.

Interestingly, the work is not quite a concerto, for though the piano is of prime importance, it is integrated into the structure of the work in a way few 20th-century composers have managed to accomplish without at the same time drowning the soloist in a sea of orchestral sound. In its relatively few performances, the work has generally been successful with audiences; its initial performances were by Szymanowski and by Rubinstein, to whom it is dedicated.

One of the last major works Szymanowski was able to write before his death in 1937 was the Second Violin Concerto (1932-33).[8] The big, dense composition is one of the most difficult to comprehend among the composer's later scores. Less long-lined and less rhythmically taut than is characteristic of his work, it gives the impression of forcing the violinist to go his own way against a rigid and unhelpful orchestra; perhaps for this reason, if for no other, the concerto may be

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4 RCA 11-9219 (deleted).

5 RCA LCS 2605.

6 It is unfortunate that these two Polish artists did not together record any of Szymanowski's music. However, one of their collaborations was preserved: the Brahms D-minor Sonata was recorded by them (HMV DB 1728/30) in the early 1930's, just before Kochanski's death. This performance, one of the treasures of the phonograph, was available several years ago on a private LP transfer; it deserves immediate public reissue.

7 So far, the only satisfactory recording of the *Symphonie Concertante* is a late 1940's performance by Rubinstein, on RCA LM 1744 (deleted). It is rumored that EMI is preparing new recordings of this and other of Szymanowski's works for release during the 1982 centenary of the composer's birth.

8 No recording of either violin concerto is currently available in the United States. A recording of historical interest, made in Warsaw at the end of the 1940's or the beginning of the 1950's and featuring the violinist Eugenia Uminska and the conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg, was issued on MUZA XL 0026.

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the most "modern" sounding of Szymanowski's compositions.

Szymanowski was now too ill and too harassed by financial worries to write very much music. His last works were two piano mazurkas (1933-34) and a gorgeous *Litany to the Virgin Mary* (1930-33) for soprano, female chorus, and orchestra. He died in a sanatorium in Switzerland, at a time when he was on the verge of public acceptance; fittingly, he was mourned as a great man.

SZYMANOWSKI apart, the story of Polish music following the high ambitions which engendered the "Young Poland" movement is not one of major composers and works. Talents burst forth, only to flicker out. The promise of folk music as a constitutive material did not survive the influence of Stravinsky's neoclassicism. One Polish composer of this period, Antoni Szalowski (1907-73), resided permanently in Paris after his studies there with the high priestess of the neoclassical movement, Nadia Boulanger; just how elegance can fail to redeem triviality may be gathered from Szalowski's thinly charming Clarinet Sonatina (1936).

Despite the best efforts of Szymanowski in time and energy, Polish musical education in the 1930's was academic and largely undistinguished. The only bright chapters written during these years were in performance, where the careers not only of Rubinstein and Kochański but also of the great conductor Artur Rodzinski and later the pianist Witold Malcuzynski assumed international stature.

During World War II musical life in Poland came virtually to a halt. What might have happened after the war, through cultural reconstruction under conditions of freedom and relative abundance, can never be known; the imposition of a new Russian tyranny and the arbitrary rearrangement of Polish geography through the moving of frontiers westward made an easy resumption of creative life impossible.

The reign of Stalinist aesthetics in postwar Poland was brief; by 1953 Stalin was dead. Of all the Soviet satellites, Poland quickly proved the most tolerant of the avant-garde and of musical experimentation. In the years since the thaw, four names have become known abroad as prominent figures in Polish composition; of these, three have been officially approved at home.

The oldest of these composers, Grazyna Bacewicz (1909-69), is perhaps the most highly regarded woman composer of the 20th century. A violin student of Carl Flesch and a composition student of Nadia Boulanger in Paris, Bacewicz remained faithful to neoclassicism for most of her creative life; her music seems earnest, weighty, and a little dry.

Andrzej Panufnik (born 1914) and Witold Lutoslawski (born 1913) were wartime duo-piano collaborators, but after the war their careers diverged; Panufnik was, until the death of Stalin, the big man of Polish music, while Lutoslawski was content to remain to one side. In 1954, however, all this changed. Panufnik, saying he could no longer endure artistic conditions in Poland, left for permanent residence in England. There it has been his fate to become gradually less important musically as he was immediately rejected politically in Poland.[9] Lutoslawski, by contrast, bids fair to become the grand eminence of musical life at home, traveling the world, giving lectures, and collecting prizes.

Not only the careers but also the music of these two composers are vastly dissimilar. Panufnik's later works, after a promising start in the *Tragic Overture* (1942, reconstructed 1945), are increasingly marked by static harmonic and rhythmic underpinnings; the *Sinfonia di Sfere* (1975) and the *Sinfonia mistica* (1977), to mention two of his more recent works, seem to be located nowhere in particular and to have no place to go. Lutoslawski's music, on the other hand, possesses the comfortable interest which always inheres in the moderately up-to-date; he has written in a variety of styles, ranging from conservative to avant-garde, from folk-based to crowd-pleasing, from serial to aleatoric. But whatever the style, the result seems the same—businesslike and finally inconsequential.

The most famous Polish composer internationally is undoubtedly Krzysztof Penderecki (born 1933). A personally engaging figure, he epitomizes, in his progress from serialism through timbral experimentation to neoromanticism, the composers' ceaseless search since 1945 for a musical vocabulary which might find an audience, any audience, anywhere. He has also traversed a standard course in extra-musical inspiration. In 1960, he paid tonal tribute to the casualties of atomic warfare in *To the Victims of Hiroshima*, a work full of frightening string slides and outcries; in 1963-65, carrying on where Bach left off, he wrote a large-scale religious work, the *St. Luke Passion*, based in part on Gregorian chant and old Polish religious music; in 1973 he composed a percussion spectacular, the First Symphony, on a commission from the Perkins Engine Group of England; more recently he has given us a Second Symphony (1980), subtitled "Christmas," in which he makes repeated use of "Silent Night."

None of Penderecki's music seems likely to remain very long in the repertory either of musicians or of audiences; his stylistic and literary peregrinations are of interest more as data of cultural history than as a permanent musical accomplishment. Sadly, for a man so deeply Polish, he has found himself spending a great deal of his time abroad, engaged in the same melancholy task of performance-hunting which is the lot of composers the world over.

Now Poland is once again in crisis, trapped between the hammer of Soviet belligerence and the anvil of economic insufficiency and paralysis. In coming days there will be an understandable tendency both inside and outside Poland to emphasize spiritual over material factors, to glorify (as seems currently true in the case of the literary avant-garde) aesthetic products whose merit lies more in their political symbolism than in their value as art. And yet, who can say? In Poland a patriotic movement al-

[9] A new work of Panufnik's, however, has been commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and is scheduled for performance during the current season.

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lied with a beloved church is forging a new national consciousness. In the 19th century, similar political and social conditions gave birth to the romantic music which is at the core of today's beloved repertory.

Whether Polish life has now reached such a critical cultural mass we cannot as yet know, nor can we know whether the recall of tradition, combined with an awareness on the part of Polish musicians that their work supports national unity, will enable them to progress beyond the isolation and inanition which contemporary music has been suffering these many years. The courage the Poles have shown as a people preserving their national existence would suggest that whatever they achieve in the area of culture will deserve our careful attention.

Theater

Why "Nicholas Nickleby"?

Myron Magnet

How different is the Royal Shakespeare Company's eight-and-a-half-hour version of Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* from the last "theatrical event of the decade," the Living Theater's *Paradise Now* of a dozen years ago. In those days the players demanded audience participation with a vengeance, aiming—by means of hostility mixed with earnest eroticism—to liberate viewers from the unfeeling armor of social life and so restore them, figuratively and literally stripped, to man's original openness and amity, all by 11 P.M. By contrast, in this decade's equally-heralded theatrical event, the actors personally touch the audience in the spirit of a diametrically opposed ideology, as they mingle with them at intermission, shaking hands and trading compliments in a show of ready civility that Dickens would wholeheartedly have endorsed. If the Living Theater celebrated two millennia of stage tradition by flinging down dramatic conventions one after another and dancing upon them, the Royal Shakespeare Company for its part affectionately claims that tradition as a rich inheritance. And here too it sounds an authentically Dickensian note, for the power of convention—especially theatrical convention—is second only to the power of civility among the central constructive forces of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Dramatizations of *Nickleby* are nothing new: the first one opened even before the final serial installment of the novel was published late in 1839. But none can have been so loving and skillful as this. The wonderfully inclusive script compresses the novel's 900 pages with intelligence, sometimes with brilliance, as in the scene that intercuts snippets of the conspiracy for a distressed heroine's happiness on one side of the stage with snippets of the more plausible conspiracy seeking her downfall on the other. Of the acting, no praise can be excessive. Most of the cast have caught with uncanny precision the spirit of the characters they play. Still more remarkable are those actors who handle two big roles with equal virtuosity, none more impressively than Lila Kaye as Mrs. Squeers and Mrs. Crummles. So consistently high a standard of performance, together with inventive and efficient staging, has the effect of transmitting intact Dickens's own keen pleasure in the endless, surprising variety of human character and the energetic spectacle of urban life.

But just as the first dramatization of *Nickleby*, which Dickens liked, introduced some lines so contrary to the work's world view that the actress who spoke them remembered the novelist snarling, "Cut them out," so this adaptation contains several obtuse additions, none more distorting than those tending to make the novel into a radical tract. Take, for instance, the scene where Nicholas, the young hero, appears for a job interview as private secretary to a windbag Member of Parliament, just when the MP is receiving a deputation of disgruntled constituents. All this the novel renders with heavy-handed jocularity: the MP has broken his promises to astonish the government and play the devil with everything; Nicholas turns down the job because the MP wants to put all his own duties on an underpaid secretary's shoulders; Parliament is dismissed as an inane collection of sanctimonious, self-interested nobodies. But in David Edgar's dramatization, the dignified voters charge their MP with betraying a

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MYRON MAGNET *has recently completed a book,* Dickens and the Social Order.

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pledge to take specific early-Victorian left-wing positions, and the scene closes with the MP shrilly accusing Nicholas of being a Chartist (a radical working-class political group of the 1830's and 40's which Dickens distrusted), while Nicholas calls him a "politician," in a tone and a context that seem to make that term the sneering equivalent of "class oppressor." Then, too, there is the play's closing tableau, with Nicholas sheltering in his arms a ragged, miserable Dotheboys Hall pupil, indignantly held up, one can only suppose, as testimony to systematic social injustice. In the novel, these abused boys have a quite different significance; but the impression the play gives of its hero as a crusader against social oppression is further underscored by the picture on the program and in the advertisements of an angry Nicholas raising his clenched fist in an apparently political gesture. All this, unfortunately, is not just a veneer. For by omitting certain key passages that add up to Dickens's own explanation of what *Nickleby* is about, the play ends up offering these radical gestures as its primary interpretation of the novel.

To be sure, the clenched fist is centrally important in Dickens's book, so much so that the villainous Squeerses mistakenly keep calling Nicholas "Mr. Knuckleboy." It is important, however, not as a political symbol but because *Nicholas Nickleby* is a novel not just "about" but indeed *obsessed* with aggression as an overwhelming human problem for which the book, try as it may, can find no wholly satisfactory solution. On almost every page of the novel, some act of violence occurs or threatens, and the play is appropriately punctuated by the thud of blows. People are quick to hate in *Nickleby*, and a random, spontaneous aggressiveness pervades both play and novel, from the shower of muffins that pelts the stockholders' meeting at the play's very start, through the young aristocrats who pull off door knockers and beat up policemen for fun, to the more menacing image of the champagne bottle turned into a lethal weapon at Lord Frederick's party. Out of the blue, a vile creature like the toad-eating Mr. Pyke slaps a clumsy opera usher, but even such pacific characters as Mr. Lillyvick the water-rate collector or Mr. Lenville the tragedian start fights over nothing. And the dramatic recitation that enlivens Mr. Kenwigs's party is—what else?—*The Blood Drinker's Burial.*

BUT what no viewer or reader of *Nickleby* can ever forget is the aggression of the two villains, Wackford Squeers and Ralph Nickleby, whose malevolent energy turns the wheels of the plot. Mr. Squeers is proprietor of one of those infamous Yorkshire schools, squalid warehouses for unwanted children —the illegitimate, the crippled, the retarded—schools whose advertisements assure parents or guardians in large letters of "No Vacations" for pupils. Ever since his own childhood, Dickens relates in the novel's preface, these schools had always exemplified to him a degree of sadism and violence almost unimaginable but nevertheless occurring constantly, and an investigatory expedition to Yorkshire just before he sat down to write *Nickleby* confirmed for him the painful truth of that early impression. The schools are such dens of "neglect, cruelty, and disease, as no writer of fiction would have the boldness to imagine." (One pleasant effect of Dickens's novel was to shame these institutions out of business in short order.)

If anything, the play intensifies the sordid brutality of this concentration camp for boys simply by making the novel's vague, undifferentiated crowd into a collection of recognizably individual human victims with palpable flesh to hurt. From the moment Squeers enters the play, cuffing a weepy new pupil of Dotheboys Hall, he is a dynamo of violence, administering blows and whippings with hardly an intermission. Waiting for the crippled, slow-witted Smike to be neatly trussed for flogging by his schoolmates, Squeers vows that he'll "stop just short of flaying him alive," and by then the audience knows as well as the Dotheboys pupils that the ogre-like, one-eyed schoolmaster will be as good as his word, if not better. There's nothing he likes more. And when he's not actively hurting what Dickens calls his collection of "infant misery," then the cold, the dirt, the spoiled and insufficient rations, the fear, the lovelessness, the lack of humanizing nurture are all doing the job for him—sometimes lethally. He makes grimly explicit that the boys, who pass their listless days doing his household's menial chores, are not so much his pupils as his slaves.

OF *Nickleby*'s two principal embodiments of aggression, the second and more complex is Nicholas's uncle Ralph, the usurer. Unlike his colleague Arthur Gride, a lean, pinched, cringing goblin, constantly cackling over the ledgers he keeps locked in a massive trunk, Ralph Nickleby is no ordinary, miserly usurer. Avarice is by no means the ruling passion of this strangely impressive character, whose chief actions in the story consist of persecuting his unoffending niece and nephew, Kate and Nicholas, and maliciously hounding to his death his own long-lost son, the pathetic Smike. He is a man the novel describes as capable of elevating "his quiet and stealthy malignity to such a pitch, that there was scarcely anything he would not have hazarded to gratify it." Hatred is his paramount emotion, and he loves money because he knows it's the best weapon malice can have.

"How people dupe themselves!" sneers Ralph in the play, summing up the world view that is inseparable from his cosmic aggression and that makes him so psychologically interesting and weighty a villain. Pretending to unflinching self-knowledge and unique truthfulness, he despises the world of self-deceivers, and his boast of authenticity further reinforces his aggression by confirming his refusal to accommodate himself to the concerns of others. Stifling all social emotions—for even to *feel* the wants and values of others would be to dilute the self-subsistent authenticity of his inner life—he is left only with feelings of hostility and belligerence. His suicide in the novel is an act of aggression against the whole universe; and having said he believes the reality of any pretty face is the grinning skull beneath it, he ends by choosing for himself the ultimate authenticity of death.

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Not understanding this, the play's adaptor puts into Ralph's mouth some nonsensical last words about being "an outcast" (words also jarringly given to Smike) and so denatures his powerful final scene, in spite of John Woodvine's fine acting.

All this violence is terrible and Dickens, whose hatred of cruelty and injustice is palpable throughout *Nickleby*, deplores it—but not because it's political oppression, as the play's audience is led to conclude. Picking up this cue, the New York *Times* reviewer, for example, saw in Smike "the perfect apotheosis of those oppressed souls Dickens championed." But, on reflection, surely a crippled half-wit would be a contemptuous symbol for the oppressed; and surely a school for repudiated middle-class boys, a school whose annual fee amounted to a laborer's yearly wage, makes an unconvincing allegory for an oppressive social order.

FAR from being the result of unjust social arrangements, violence in *Nickleby* is a consequence of the original, inborn nature of man, in which aggression forms a constituent instinct. The novel makes this clear in the brilliantly funny and sinister scene, substantially cut in the play, in which the conspirators Ralph, Squeers, and Snawley burst into Nicholas's house to tear Smike away from his new friend and protector. They fraudulently claim that Snawley is Smike's long-lost father and is entitled to his custody. There follows an outrageous "philosophical discourse," largely missing in the play, between Squeers and Snawley. What was it, asks Snawley, that made me interested in Smike when I first saw him? What was it "that made me burn all over with a wish to chastise him severely" for escaping from Dotheboys Hall?

> "It was parental instinct, sir," observed Squeers.
>
> "That's what it was, sir," rejoined Snawley; "the elevated feeling . . . of the ancient Romans and Grecians, and of the beasts of the field and birds of the air, with the exception of rabbits and tomcats, which sometimes devour their offspring. My heart yearned towards him. I could have—I don't know what I couldn't have done to him in the anger of a father."
>
> "It only shows what Natur is, sir," said Mr. Squeers. . . .
>
> "She is a holy thing, sir," remarked Snawley.
>
> "I believe you," added Mr. Squeers, with a moral sigh. . . . "Oh what a blessed thing, sir, to be in a state of natur!"

The cannibal cats, the anger of a father, the wish to chastise—at every moment this "discourse" hilariously subverts the notion that nature endows all creatures only with innocent and praiseworthy impulses. For Dickens, the state of nature is not holy but Hobbesian, the war of all against all. As for parental instinct: presiding over this persecution of Smike, which really helps kill him, is his oblivious father, Ralph Nickleby.

Certainly this isn't to say that men are without an endowment of finer feelings. But as Charles Cheeryble, Nicholas's Pickwickian fairy-godfather, explains in the novel but not in the play, these feelings "must be reared and fostered, or it is as natural that they should be wholly obscured, and that new feelings should usurp their place, as it is that the sweetest productions of the earth, left untended, should be choked with weeds and briars."

Only fragments of this explanatory framework are left standing in the play—as when the predacious Sir Mulberry Hawk, who shows that even sex can become merely another mode of aggression, flings the resisting Kate Nickleby down before him on a sofa while derisively counseling her to "be more natural—my dear Miss Nickleby, be more natural—do." Or there is Squeers instructing his famished pupils, with brutal humor, to "subdue your appetites, my dears, and you've conqured human natur." These pointers, along of course with the whole dramatic situation, leave Dickens's meaning still discernible, but regrettably more dimly so in the play than in the novel.

WHAT is to be done in the face of this primary aggressiveness of human beings that always threatens man's life with anarchy and violence? For *Nickleby* does offer a range of antidotes, none so convincing, however, as the description of the problem itself. First, one can fight fire with fire and oppose the wicked with force, like Nicholas, who with his clenched fist seems an impetuous embodiment of the corollary to Locke's Law of Nature, giving every man a right to punish an offender. Frank Cheeryble, who makes his entrance in the midst of a fist fight, is a similar scourge of offenders; while poor Newman Noggs, righteous but weak, is reduced to punishing the egregious Ralph in pantomime, hidden behind a door.

Or else one can counter human nature's dark promptings by taking seriously Squeers's zany advice to subdue your appetites and conquer human nature. Such is the purpose of Nicholas and Kate in refusing (very temporarily) to marry the people they love for fear of appearing predatory. Victorians will sometimes be Victorian, after all.

Or there are the Cheeryble brothers, those plump, elderly patrons of Nicholas who are Dickens's simplest answer to the problem of aggression. For these profoundly civil, inexhaustibly benevolent twins have escaped its taint altogether, having been rendered, one supposes, almost genetically incapable of any radically individualist impulse by virtue of being parts of an inseparable pair, like andirons. Dickens emphasizes this by affording them the luxury of endlessly counterfeiting angry violence, as when, shouting "Damn your obstinacy" at their loyal old clerk while regarding him with faces "radiant with attachment" and "without the faintest spark of anger," they generously announce plans to make him a partner—threatening that "if he won't submit to it peaceably, we must have recourse to violence." Wittily highlighting this trait even further, the play has the Cheerybles vehemently punctuate their roaring colloquies with crashing blows to the table. And surely the directors, Trevor Nunn and John Caird, are right in making the brothers figures out of a fairy tale. For they ring false in Dickens's novel, not just because they run a business whose only ac-

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tivity seems to be corporate philanthropy, but because in the book's own terms their lack of aggression makes them too good to be true.

The same cannot be said of the Kenwigses, a lower-middle-class family (like Dickens's own) who provide, under the comedy with which *Nickleby* treats their thirst for gentility, the story's most convincing answer to aggression. For they are determined to make over human nature, to refine and civilize it, to retailor it by means of dancing lessons, French lessons, genteel manners, pretty dresses, and so on, all according to the latest middle-class pattern. Anxiously attuned to the opinions and needs of others, before whom they yearn to sparkle, they redeem aggression and make its energy creative by enlisting their competitiveness wholly in the service of civilization and its values. No less civil and ceremonious than the Cheerybles, they are punctilious guardians of what Dickens calls, with a combination of amusement and conviction, the "polite forms and ceremonies which must be observed in civilized life, or mankind relapse into [its] original barbarism"—the barbarism of Hobbesian nature. Omitting this passage, along with some of the comic obsession with gentility, the play flattens the Kenwigses: some reviewers, judging the adaptation unnecessarily long, have complained that "extraneous" characters like these could easily go. But in the novel, their version of middle-class life, with all its ordinariness, silliness, and pretension, is no mean thing.

For retailoring human nature, who can compare with the Crummleses, that shabby troupe of strolling provincial actors who are the comic triumph of novel and play alike? Taming aggression is their stock-in-trade, in creaky melodramas like *The Mortal Struggle* or their hilarious pantomime of *The Indian Savage and the Maiden*, in which the civilizing power of love subdues wild ferocity. Nothing, though, can top the play Nicholas translates for them, involving a man who stabs his son, throws his wife and child out of the house, and relents in the end, when a clock striking ten interrupts his suicide by reminding him of a similar clock in his infancy, making him burst into tears, drop his gun, and become an exemplary citizen forever after. The Crummleses, in other words, can retailor even the villainy of a character like Ralph Nickleby. (Edgar's adaptation has them go on to give *Romeo and Juliet* a happy ending, in a hilarious and appropriate addition, partly deriving from Mr. Wopsle's travesty of *Hamlet* in *Great Expectations*, but owing infinitely more to the skill of the adaptor and the company, and to their consummate understanding of the tradition of their craft. Indeed, though all through the play the look and feel of England at the accession of the youthful Queen Victoria is perfect, bringing the young Dickens's world vividly to life, the verisimilitude gets almost uncanny in the Crummles company, who appear magically conjured out of the prints, the toy theaters, and the caricatures of the period, with all their freshness restored. But then the Royal Shakespeare Company loves these characters almost as much as the theater-loving Dickens did.)

Vincent Crummles, manager of this troupe, explains the principle of its theater when Nicholas, watching a swordfight in rehearsal, suggests the performance might be better if one actor weren't so much taller than the other. Nonsense, says Crummles: "Why, it's the very essence of the combat that there should be a foot or two between them. How are you to get up the sympathies of the audience in a legitimate manner, if there isn't a little man contending against a great one—unless there's at least five to one? . . ." All the conventions of this theater, and melodrama is made up of nothing but conventions, go to insure the triumph of justice over aggression, of right over brute force—like the conventions of society, but more dependable. And like the whole effort of human culture, the Crummles theater strives to hold up an ideal, however simple or fustian, of what life should be to be fully human. Surely these conventions and ideals retain their power undiminished; watching *Nicholas Nickleby*, itself a melodrama of the higher kind, the New York audience vehemently hisses the cruelty of Squeers and greets his downfall with tumultuous applause.

And how far *Nickleby*'s notion of a truly human existence is from Ralph Nickleby's grim authenticity. A fully human identity is necessarily stagy and contrived: how can it not be, if we live in a society and are continually playing to others? No wonder, from Nicholas disguised as "Mr. Johnson" to Mr. Mantallini with his kisses and poison bottle, everyone in *Nickleby* is always acting. And no wonder so theatrical a novel works so well on the stage.

All this is as full an answer to the problem of aggression as Dickens could frame in *Nickleby*, his third novel, finished when he was only twenty-seven, and still bearing marks of immaturity for all its comic genius. But five years later, he had worked out an answer that satisfied him completely. For in writing *Barnaby Rudge*—his fifth novel, centering on the occurrence of an anti-Catholic pogrom in London in 1780—he had meditated on an instance when mankind really had "relapsed into [its] original barbarism," and he had elaborated in response a somber and deeply-considered political philosophy that explained, in the tradition of Hobbes and Burke, how society, as its primary function, restrains and defuses man's inherent aggressiveness.

Shortly after finishing that novel, Dickens sailed for a long tour of America, where he rather disconcertedly found massive confirmation of his new theory by observing (as he thought) the state of nature in full swing—all emphatically, indeed luridly, reported in his American travel book and in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This sixth novel brought to a close the phase of Dickens's career that began with *Nicholas Nickleby*'s concentration on aggression. The lessons of this phase, not surprisingly, stayed with him always; however critical his later novels may be of the specific failings of Victorian society, and however much weariness they may express with the burdensome weight of the social condition, they never forget that only in society can man's life be not brutish but human.

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Our Lady of Corruption

Richard Grenier

"He shook hands with the Pope. How many pimps can say that?"

This single line of dialogue, plucked almost at random from the middle of *True Confessions*, tells you a good deal about this remarkable film. It is obsessed with corruption, both venal and of the flesh—which is no doubt why millions of people are thronging to see it all over the country. But it is also about corruption of the spirit, arrogance, the sin of pride, in Church canon the greatest of all sins. Then, too, it is about the ultimate enigma of power. A great and mighty organization, in this case the Roman Catholic Church, with an unshakable sense of mission, feels it must preserve itself. What means are allowed it?

Robert De Niro and Robert Duvall play two brothers, one the chancellor of the archdiocese of Los Angeles, a rising star of the Church, the other a sergeant in the homicide squad in the Los Angeles police department. Both are corrupt—each in his own way. The relationship between the two brothers, the center of the film, is both compelling and complex. The two actors' performances are nothing short of astonishing. Ulu Grosbard, the movie's director, becomes at one stroke one of America's leading film-makers. The screenplay, by John Gregory Dunne and his wife, Joan Didion, is, if anything, better than the novel by Dunne from which the movie is drawn. Most "serious" American films tend very sharply to the didactic and the simple. *True Confessions* does not, the complexity of human character being one of its hallmarks. It is the best American movie I have seen in a long time, and, quite incidentally, the only truly Catholic movie I can think of that has ever been made in this country, worthy of comparison—although overwhelmingly American in its naturalistic setting—with the novels of Mauriac and Bernanos. (I am not an admirer of the "Catholic" works of the English converts, Waugh and Greene.) What I think of earlier American films which have attempted to deal with Catholic subjects can be inferred from another line of dialogue from *True Confessions*: "Show me a priest whose eyes twinkle, and I'll show you a moron."

Having performed this particular reverence myself, I should point out to anxious readers that the pimp referred to above would most assuredly have kissed the Pope's ring and not shaken his hand—but the speaker of the lines is a whorehouse madam named Brenda Samuels who presumably would not be aware of such subtleties. And I should add that the ability to deal with a serious subject, but also, by working on several levels, to attract a large popular audience, is a talent for which I feel no scorn whatever; rather the contrary. During the two weeks ending October 21, *True Confessions* had the second highest box-office score of any film in the United States and Canada, and, given the other movies up at the top of the list, I can only rejoice. I also feel an almost personal debt to Robert De Niro. Many a leading star would not have taken the part of the priest brother, for the role of the detective is, in a word, flashier. But De Niro was coming from *Raging Bull*'s Jake Lamotta, a brutal animal, for which he won an Academy Award (I used to think an excellent performance rewarded by an Academy Award was an aberration of nature, but this has been less so in recent years). Perhaps what attracted De Niro was the dizzying change of pace: thirty-eight-year-old Monsignor Desmond Spellacy, consumed with ambition, but circumspect, shrewd—some might say a young Alexander Haig, or the Haig we would have seen if, like his brother, he had taken Holy Orders and achieved his spectacular rise not in the military and in government but in the Church. De Niro, also, is not one of the numerous "name" stars who dictate the thesis and ideology of a movie to its producer, writer, and director; instead he concentrates, monomaniacally, on the creation of his character. Nor is he afraid of fast competition. Knowing Duvall for the actor he is, he knew what he was going in against. But De Niro, they tell me, feels that each helps the other. The better Duvall was, the better he, too, would be. And, lo, it came to pass.

The opening scene of the movie, before the titles, shows retired L.A. police department sergeant Tom Spellacy (Duvall looking perhaps fifteen years older than his true age) driving out in an old car through the barren, mesquite-dotted desert of the southwest. He arrives at a rundown, Mexican-style church in the midst of what is scarcely even a town: a scattering of cheap houses in the desert, hardly more imposing than the mesquite. The assistant parson, an enthusiastic Chicano, tells Tom he is there helping out until Monsignor Desmond Spellacy is "a hundred percent" again. The brothers meet. Now they are two old men—"just a couple of harps," as Dunne says in his novel, invoking a colloquial term for the Irish. But in the old days one of them was a "harp with class," headed for the top, while the other, who brought him down, was a cop on the take, the bagman of Wilshire Vice.

Anyone who saw the uncanny transformation of De Niro from the lean, murderous Lamotta in

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the ring in his prime to the fat, punchy, old pug of his later days has an inkling of how effectively De Niro conveys a sick old priest. "What's this about you not being a hundred percent, Des?" asks his brother. "Ah, who is, Tommy? Who is?" Des talks of the affairs of the parish. The daughter of one of his parishioners, a Carmelite nun, is leaving the order to become a professional bowler. "What can I do?" Desmond laughs. "Say a prayer to Our Lady that she bowls a winning string." "How are you, Des?" Tom asks. His brother replies with a joke. "I asked you a straight question, Des," says Tom. And Desmond gives him a straight answer, peacefully, with no self-pity, "I'm going to die, Tommy." The look that comes over Tom's face at this point is one of the most extraordinary I have ever seen. It is a flickering smile, almost a *rictus*. But through this habitual pretense of cynicism come flashes of torment, compassion, envy, guilt. "You're not kidding," he says, the smile still flickering. Then it is gone, but the face does not crumble. The habit of self-denial is too strong. "The arteries leading to the old pump are shot," says Desmond calmly.

LEAVING the two old men sitting in the desert wasteland, the titles roll, and the scene changes to a sumptuous wedding at a Roman Catholic cathedral, with the church shown in all its majesty and glory, gorgeous raiment and splendid music, the handsome young Monsignor Spellacy reciting the litany in Latin, swinging the censer, making the sign of the cross, blessing the opulently dressed assemblage in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Straight cut. We are in the streets of East L.A., even then a great poor neighborhood of Los Angeles. It is the late 40's. Detective Spellacy's car has just boiled over, but he and his partner Crotty (Kenneth McMillan) go about their mission anyway. Soon they are in a whorehouse. There is an exchange of looks between Tom Spellacy and Brenda Samuels, the madam, that says a lot. It is clear that they once had a love affair, long ago perhaps, when she was younger, and perhaps there was something else, too. Tom once more has his cynical smile, but beneath the smile, ineffable and elusive, there is: what? Conscience? Guilt? His confessor would have said a sense of sin, but Tom Spellacy hasn't been to confession in some time. "How's your wife?" asks Brenda. "Left," says Tom. One word. Brenda leads them down the corridor to a room where a dead man is lying on a bed. "Had a heart attack while committing a mortal sin," says Brenda coolly. "Father Mickey!" Crotty bursts out. "From Saint Bernadette's down in Redondo Beach! He used to run great bingo games." "Get that stiff out of here," says Brenda, and to Tom, "Tell your brother." Later, in private, she says to Tom in a voice not without anger, "Did you ever think why I got indicted and not you? Because your brother's chancellor of the goddamn archdiocese, that's why! It wouldn't have looked good, would it? But somebody had to take the fall. And it was me." Her voice changes. "And all the time I was in the joint you never wrote me."

WE HAVE already cut back to the elaborate garden reception following the marriage in the cathedral. With Monsignor Spellacy is the father of the bride, Jack Amsterdam (Charles Durning), *nouveau riche*, fleshy, a touch uncouth, one might say. "Fourteen thousand roses," he says proudly. "That's a lot of goddamn roses, Monsignor And every one will be in a Catholic hospital tomorrow!" A moment later he is inviting Monsignor Spellacy to be his guest at the Santa Anita race track. "I had one the other day, you could have bet the Sistine Chapel on it," he says confidentially. "Paid fourteen to one." When Amsterdam has moved on, Desmond laughs to the attorney for the archdiocese, "It must have been a boat race if you could bet the Sistine Chapel on it." And later, "I hear Jack's overextended, the banks are going to call in his loans."

When Detective Spellacy pays his call on his brother the Monsignor, he gives him the lowdown on Jack Amsterdam, who, eminent Catholic layman though he now may be, started out in life a mobster, ran whores and every racket in East L.A., using mob muscle on competitors, having men killed, techniques he still finds of service now that he is a wealthy real-estate developer and building contractor. Of course, when he built schools and hospitals for the Church, eager for respectability, he did it for a very good price, which is why Monsignor Spellacy, as chancellor in charge of the financial administration of the archdiocese, has found good use for him. "How do you know all this?" the Monsignor asks his brother, the detective. "Listen, Des," says Tom. "You're in the Holy Ghost business, right? When you tell me something about the Holy Ghost, I believe you." "Which means I should believe you," says Desmond skeptically. Tom doesn't answer, but, rising, deposits in the center of his brother's desk the crucifix and rosary belonging to the dead priest in the brothel, saying only, "Father Mickey from Saint Bernadette's in Redondo Beach. They say he was a whizz at bingo."

Los Angeles is a place that loves giving proper names to its flamboyant cases of violent crime (the most recent being the "Hillside Strangler"). And at this point in *True Confessions*, the movie is drawn precipitously into the case of the "Virgin Tramp"—suggested, I am told, by the "Black Dahlia" case of some years back. It is an unusually unsavory affair: a girl found naked and literally cut in two, no virgin at all of course but a prostitute, a rose tattoo on her hip, a votive candle in her vagina. But this is the unpretty subterranean world in which homicide and vice detectives work, and Tom Spellacy and his partner go about their job with cool detachment. "Don't think I'm going to lose any sleep over who took this broad out," laughs Crotty. "You know how we're going to solve this case? Five years from now a guy's going to run a red light, and when we pull him in he's going to say, 'I killed her!' And we're going to say, 'You killed who?' And he's going to say, 'the girl with the rose tattoo!' And we're going to say, 'What rose tattoo?'" Needless to say, this is not how the case unfolds. But I shall not give away the unwindings of the case of

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the Virgin Tramp, insisting only that it is not an arbitrary adjunct to the plot, added for reasons of sensationalism, but skillfully interwoven with the movie's central theme.

IT IS important to understand that the relationship between the two Spellacy brothers is not "brotherly" in the conventional sense. There are meetings, items of intelligence exchanged, mutual services rendered, but each has his own reasons for disliking the other, and Tom's insistent blasphemies do not help things ("May all your sons be Jesuits, Sister"). The next time the brothers meet it is in an expensive restaurant, a gathering place of the Los Angeles monied elite, with the Monsignor picking up the tab. Jack Amsterdam is also in the room, and drops over to the table, delivering himself of what he considers hearty small talk. Then there is an odd pause, after which Tom says, "I used to work for you." "Oh, yeah?" asks Amsterdam, his head raised, curious, cautious. "When you were running whores I was your bag man on Wilshire Vice," says Tom evenly. "I used to do the payoffs for Brenda. I'm sure you remember Brenda."

When Amsterdam has left, the scene closes with a shot of Monsignor Spellacy's face, looking at his brother. Not a word is spoken. Not a muscle moves. It is a marvelous look.

The advice on Jack Amsterdam has been taken in by the canny Desmond, however. "We've got to unload Jack," he tells the inner group of top laymen of the archdiocese. "It's a full-time job looking the other way with him." They decide to sweeten the pill for Amsterdam by holding a big ceremony naming him "Catholic Layman of the Year." Desmond, in carefully chosen words, passes the recommendation along to his Bishop, Cardinal Danaher (Cyril Cusack), who, in an extremely nuanced scene, manages to be partly worldly and yet to speak the ancient phrase "Holy Mother Church" with reverence, utterly without cynicism. The Bishop tells Desmond he is to be appointed Auxiliary Bishop in return for his services to the archdiocese: "Then you'll find an ambitious young monsignor to do your dirty work for you." The road upward now opens wide for Desmond Spellacy: Bishop. Perhaps Cardinal. Dizzying peaks for a "harp" from Boyle Heights. "You like power," an old priest, Seamus (Burgess Meredith), told Desmond earlier. "But you need power to save souls," Desmond protested.

DURING THE ceremony for Catholic Layman of the Year, presided over by Monsignor Spellacy, Detective Spellacy sits at a table in the rear, seething. Jack Amsterdam, ornamented with a Kelly-green sash, beams with satisfaction. "You got to be a *rich* pimp to get a sash like that," mutters Tom. "A cop, he's not a pillar of the community." After the presentation, unable to control himself, he rips the sash from Amsterdam's chest, and causes pandemonium by jeering, "I wonder if you were wearing that when you were banging Lois Fazenda!"—otherwise known as the Virgin Tramp. The scene quickly turns into an ugly brawl, and the world of the archdiocese of Los Angeles suddenly begins to darken.

"For a hooker, she really got around in the archdiocese," says Tom mordantly to his partner later. "Screwed the archdiocese lawyer, the Catholic Layman of the Year. Came back from the track with the chancellor." For it turns out that, in all innocence, Monsignor Desmond Spellacy himself is implicated in the murder, having once given hitchhiker Lois Fazenda a lift in his car on the way back from the track at Santa Anita. Desmond's meeting with the girl was entirely blameless, but if it all came out, no matter how you explained it, it would look bad in the papers.

Next, Brenda Samuels commits suicide. Her last telephone call, the police learn, was to Jack Amsterdam. "Whatever it was she asked him for," says Crotty, "I guess she didn't get it." Now beneath his cynical exterior it is clear that Tom Spellacy was deeply attached to this woman, is shaken by a visit to her body in the morgue, and holds Jack Amsterdam responsible for her death. "We're going to get him!" he says to his partner bitterly as they walk out of the morgue. Crotty, vulgar but by no means stupid, senses that Tom's anger is directed not only at Amsterdam, but—for deeper reasons—at Monsignor Desmond Spellacy. "What are you trying to prove?" asks Crotty. "That he's just like you? *He is.* He's your brother." What is even stranger is that, at this point, both detectives know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jack Amsterdam did *not* kill the girl with the tattoo. She was killed by another man, now dead in his turn. But an uncontrollable juggernaut has been set in motion.

We see Jack Amsterdam at his first confession in twenty years, his confessor none other than Monsignor Spellacy. It is a bizarre scene. "Cut the crap," says Amsterdam. "I met the Pope, for Chrissakes." At the end Desmond Spellacy mumbles in Latin, makes the sign of the cross, and says, "Go in peace." But it is not the end. Amsterdam, raging through the shut window, cries, "Your brother's trying to hang that whore on me! You tell him if he grabs me, it's your ass that's going to be in a sling! Not mine, not his, but yours!" Monsignor Spellacy turns to the other side of the confessional booth, where another penitent awaits, his brother Tom. "What are you doing giving absolution to that mick pimp!" Tom says, calmer than Amsterdam, but more deadly. "We're here to pick him up, Des. I wanted you to know. I didn't want to do anything behind your back." "Did he do it, Tommy?" Desmond asks, and when he doesn't get an answer, repeats the question, "Did he kill her?" Tom finally answers, white hot, "I don't care if he killed her! I don't give a shit! And I don't care if you go down with him!"

There follows a hurly burly on the courthouse steps: reporters, photographers, Amsterdam, and Desmond Spellacy in black suit, black felt hat, white turnaround collar, dignified as ever. But it is the end for Monsignor Spellacy.

Then we are back to two old men in a small church in the desert. Desmond, now the parson of a forlorn little parish, is telling his brother calmly that he is dying. "It's all right," says Desmond, smiling. "I'm ready. My bags are packed." "I'll sing an Irish song at your funeral," says Tom laughing,

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the old compulsive, cynical *rictus* not hiding his true feelings any more. "With my voice, it will wake you up." Suddenly there is a strange working of his face and his eyes are wet. "It must have been hard, Des," he says. "It was my fault, back then, every bit of it, all of it. I'm sorry." "No, Tommy," says Desmond, still smiling. "You were my salvation. You made me remember things I'd forgotten."

Taking his brother by the arm, he leads him out into the arid little churchyard to show him the plot he has reserved for his grave. "I have no gift for loving God, Tommy," says Desmond as they walk. "But Seamus taught me that was no drawback as long as I could make myself useful. There's a kind of peace in that. I know you don't believe it, but it's true." "So this is it," says Tom as they stand in the pitiable little graveyard. He is laughing that odd laugh, one I have never heard before. "I suppose this place is about as good as any other," he says. As the camera moves away, we see them both standing there at the edge of the small burial plot, with Tom still laughing, "This is it. This is it." It is the end of the movie. A priest who sinned, but made his peace with God. And his brother Tom. From a Catholic point of view, Tom might easily be seen as a soul in torment. From another, as a man bearing the crushing burden of disbelief. He is certainly not a tranquil spirit. There is no comforting certitude, no haven, for the nonbeliever. So they stand there, looking down at the earth in which one of them will soon lie. Two old men. Two brothers. Two harps.

But the central question of the movie, and the question behind its dramatic climax, is: why does Tom Spellacy destroy his brother Desmond? Now for those of simple heart, Tom had a deep attachment for Brenda Samuels, holds Amsterdam responsible for her death, and his motive is uncomplicated: avenge Brenda. (I note that this motivation is absent from the novel—not that I object to its inclusion in the movie.) Tom also, of course, hates Jack Amsterdam with a passion: a mobster, a murderer, a pimp, risen to honor as a pillar of the Catholic community. What more vile travesty of the principles of Christianity could there be? But even easygoing, on-the-take Detective Frank Crotty, Tom's partner, a man not much given to soul-searching, senses that part of Tom's rage is directed at his own brother, who used Amsterdam, after all, and knowingly, for as long as he could. Why should Desmond Spellacy, who wheels and deals with mobsters, and not just for the good of the "Holy Mother Church" but to serve his own ambition, be admired and adulated by all, while his brother Tom —by Church canon less corrupt than he—is considered a lowly, tainted cop? I need not expound on another aspect of the relationship—one need only recall Billy and Jimmy Carter acting out on the national scene the envy and resentment that can burn in the breast of an obscure brother against another who has reached the heights. But also, deep in Tom Spellacy's heart, he knows that regardless of what his brother has done, he himself is corrupt, has taken mob money. And there exists a kind of sinner, particularly one suffering from guilt, who must bring everything down with him. Beneath all these, one senses yet a further motivation: Tom's action is a symbolic protest against the materialism of his Church. He may not let a day pass without committing some sacrilege against this Church, but it is nonetheless the Church into which he was born, and from which he never really escapes.*

Most movies, particularly successful ones, proceed from severely simple character motivations. Actors and directors may embellish and elaborate, but basic motivations are usually very clear-cut. It is one of the splendors of *True Confessions* that Tom's final, critical, explosive action comes from a wild assortment of motives, high, low, sublime, base, all welding themselves into an utterly human, utterly credible whole. And Tom's action, so filled with resentment and rage, is the cause of his brother's redemption. In the novel, Des buys another plot in the graveyard beside his own, in the hope that Tom will one day lie beside him. Whether he does or not, we will never know.

Now, before proceeding further, I must pay tribute to the superlative skills of director Ulu Grosbard and his cast, even beyond the two headliners: Charles Durning as Amsterdam, Rose Gregorio as Brenda Samuels, Kenneth McMillan as Tom's detective partner Crotty, Cyril Cusack as the Cardinal, Burgess Meredith as a priest with what Ibsen called "integrity fever," and Ed Flanders as the slippery archdiocesan attorney who becomes "friends" with the murdered prostitute. Without the power and stunning verisimilitude of performances and direction, the film, simply, would not have come through. I also pay tribute to screenplay coauthor Joan Didion, whose contribution was no doubt considerable, director of photography Owen Roizman, and to Father Henry Fehren, without whom, I suspect, no one would even have known his prayers in Latin. But, with all this said, *True Confessions* is one of those films where I feel I am in contact with the mind and vision of the work's original author, in this case John Gregory Dunne.

It is no secret, of course, that Dunne is fascinated with corruption. Two earlier books of his concerned (1) Las Vegas, and (2) Hollywood itself, neither place notorious for its purity or high-mindedness. I assume that Dunne was, himself, brought up in the Roman Catholic faith and I have the impression, just guesswork, that he has fallen away from the faith of his childhood—an impression shared by most Catholic clerics with whom I have spoken, one going so far as to complain that he was "sick and tired" of these books by Catholics who had "turned against their religion." I grant, in

* Such is the variety of opinion in today's Catholic Church that, although many Catholic clerics I know consider *True Confessions* frankly irreligious—while other Catholics do not—one distinguished Catholic layman finds, in the movie at least, no firm evidence that Tom Spellacy, backsliding, blasphemous, hostile to the clergy though he may be, has even lost his religious faith. I find this view difficult, as it does not offer adequate explanations for what is, to me, Tom Spellacy's quite evident torment. But *True Confessions*, it would seem, is a work of sufficient density to allow more than one knowledgable interpretation.

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any event, that Dunne has retained predominantly the "dark" side of his faith, with its emphasis on sin and morbidity, keeping much less of the soaring spirit of redemption. There must have been *some* wealthy Catholic laymen in the 40's who made their fortunes honestly in the archdiocese of Los Angeles, but one does not meet them in *True Confessions*, where the leading figures of the community are all scoundrels. I nonetheless feel that Dunne's mind may have been marked forever by his early Catholic training, and that when he criticizes the Church, he does so on the basis of its own precepts. So, with all due respect for my Catholic friends, I submit that a movie which ends with a priest, his faith intact, finding his peace in God, while his brother, his faith lost, wanders like a soul in torment, is hardly an anti-Catholic film.

One of the defenders of Catholicism who has weighed in against this movie, or at least against something in it, is William F. Buckley, Jr., in an article which I find interesting, but curious. He announces straight off his admiration for Dunne's novel, which he declares "rich as Rabelais," although he admits that the book is "textured with a blend of profanity and obscenity" and that it is "infinitely more shocking than the movie." Later Buckley explains that "Without faith there cannot, of course, be sacrilege." But when he comes to the film he puzzles me. He admits, again, that "the priest in *True Confessions* isn't actually all that hateful, no more is his boss the cardinal. . . ." Nonetheless he is much exercised against "the ease with which Hollywood now handles the theme of the thoroughly disreputable priest. . . ." I am trying to understand Buckley, and have studied carefully his references to Bing Crosby in *Going My Way*, and Spencer Tracy in *Boys Town*, and Crosby and Ingrid Bergman in *The Bells of St. Mary's*, and the changes that have come over the Church, and the world, and the world's attitude toward the Church, since these films were made. But I have been unable to locate an argument which explains why he gives Dunne's novel a clean bill of health but not Dunne's movie—unless he judges movies by different standards from those by which he judges novels, which I do not.

For those who still have a lurking suspicion that *True Confessions* might be anti-Catholic, I can recommend the works of certain Catholic writers, not so much those of America or Britain—who often have a tendency to behave like a beleaguered minority, disapproving of anything unflattering in a portrayal of the Church—but those of Catholic countries, where their own religion is dominant. One who comes to mind is the great French writer I mentioned earlier, Georges Bernanos, who, although profoundly Catholic, castigated his own Church for materialism. Always a man to go his own way, Bernanos was first a royalist, but during the Spanish Civil War gave his support to the Spanish Republic (against the opinion of many Catholics). He considered the Munich Pact of 1938 a shaming act of appeasement and a national disgrace, and left France in disgust. As it happens, one of his brilliant novels, *The Diary of a Country Priest*, a story of intense spiritual struggle, was made by the famed French director Robert Bresson into an unusually powerful and searing film in a period (1950) when American movies on Catholic subjects were still, I am sorry to say, pious slush.

But another subject important to the movie of *True Confessions*, as to the book, is the Irish. Now Dunne grew up in the East, where Irish-American communities, at least in his childhood, were tight, cohesive groups. In Los Angeles, where he now lives and chose to set his story, there is no such cohesive Irish colony, so Dunne—he admits it freely—simply made it up. (The use of the word "harp" for "Irishman," common enough in my native Boston, I have never heard even as far west as Chicago, let alone California.) But given the excellence of the results, I would be the last to begrudge Dunne this piece of artistic license. There are other instances as well. A priest, clerical friends tell me, would *never* confess his own brother. And those who find the name "Amsterdam" highly unusual for an Irishman might be interested to learn that in the novel Amsterdam is born of a Jewish father and a Mexican mother, but that this was dropped in the movie, where it was decided to make the good and the bad and the in-between, the whole lot of them, all Irishmen, all harps.

I confess I am deeply attracted to the picture of man in his fallen state presented in the movie *True Confessions*. Both branches of Western Christianity, of course, share the doctrine of Original Sin, but Catholicism, through the confessional, has institutionalized it more, much as it has institutionalized divine grace in the Eucharist. I would never presume to judge whether Protestantism or Catholicism prepares men better for life, either public or private. But I am perhaps in temporary reaction against some Americans in public life (of all religions) who have behaved as if they thought they could abolish sin—to which I can only say, with Pascal, *"Qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête,"* and welcome, as a practical guide in worldly affairs, any reminder that such an abolition is not possible.

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Books in Review

Fellow-Travelers' Tales

POLITICAL PILGRIMS: TRAVELS OF WESTERN INTELLECTUALS TO THE SOVIET UNION, CHINA, AND CUBA 1928-1979. By PAUL HOLLANDER. *Oxford University Press. 524 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by LEONARD SCHAPIRO

THERE is nothing new about travelers in countries other than their own returning with exaggerated, and often ludicrous, accounts of the merits of the way others live. Alexis de Tocqueville observed this practice among French intellectuals of the 18th century: "Not finding anything about them which seemed to conform to their ideals they went in search for it in the heart of Asia. It is no exaggeration to say that every one of them in some part of his writings passes an emphatic eulogy on China. . . . That imbecile and barbarous government . . . appeared to them the most perfect model for all nations of the world to copy."

In our century the mecca for intellectuals in "pursuit of the millennium" (in Norman Cohn's phrase) has been one or another of the countries of the world which are ruled by Communist parties—first the Soviet Union, and, since that country has become rather discredited as a social or economic model, Cuba or China. Vietnam, Albania, and Mozambique have also attracted some admirers who discerned in them the hope for the future of mankind. (One intellectual giant even suggested in 1979 that "Having created a new model of popular revolution based, for the most part, on nonviolent tactics, Iran may yet provide us with a desperately needed model of humane governance for a Third World country." As the Russians say, paper will stand anything.) The new factor in the case of the modern traveler in search of his ideal is that the countries visited are more expert than has ever been the case before in hoodwinking and beguiling visitors, in prevarication and deception, and in elaborate propaganda exercises.

The result has been to produce a rich harvest of travelers' tales from the Communist-run world—which Paul Hollander has gathered and systematically analyzed in his new book. His primary concern as a sociologist is not to scoff but to discover the motivation of the travelers. His treatment of the enormous mass of material is sober and factual, and devoid of emotional or indeed particularly critical overtones.

The definition of an "intellectual" is notoriously difficult, but the term must at least include those who teach others in schools or universities, or who seek to influence public opinion by means of the printed word. The minimum duty of an intellectual in this sense must surely be to exercise critical judgment, to beware of letting emotion color facts, not to see only those conditions which one was convinced existed before one set out, and to be on the alert for government whitewash. To read the account in this book of the imbecilities of which so many of my colleagues have delivered themselves (and of which, I suppose, I might have been guilty, had I ever traveled in these countries and written about my travels) is to experience a profound sense of shame.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the real trek of pilgrims was mainly during the terrible years of forced collectivization, famine, terror, and show trials. There might, indeed, have been more excuse for naive praise during the earlier period of the New Economic Policy, when intellectual life was relatively flourishing and when Communist enthusiasm for the future could still exhilarate. The activities of the secret police (OGPU) and other forces of repression were then still in their, quite vigorous, infancy.

But it was during the grim 30's that so many intellectual travelers from the United States and Western Europe discovered utopia in Soviet society. Here were all the desirable things that they believed their own societies lacked—social justice and equality, a sense of purpose and community, a great transformation which had triumphed over the wholly black and deplorable past, and, particularly, a humane and progressive penal system. Observations on this last aspect of Soviet life, incidentally, date mainly from the period when literally millions were rotting to death in the concentration camps on trumped-up charges.

Thus, the American historian and Sinologist Owen Lattimore described the Dalstroi camp in 1944 as "roughly compar[able] to the combination of Hudson's Bay Company and TVA"; in 1936, the English Fabians, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, described the role of the OGPU in building the Belomor Canal (in which hundreds of thousands perished) as "not merely . . . performing a great engineering feat, but in achieving a triumph in human regeneration"; Harold Laski, the political scientist and (later) chairman of the Labor party, saw the Soviet penal system in 1935 as infinitely superior in every way to the British; Anna Louise Strong, the American writer, noted that the population of the concentration camps in 1936 was "diminishing." It is, of course, embarrassing to read this drivel now. And it is only right to recall that to those who took the trouble to look, many of the true facts on the nature of Soviet society were already available at the time. The pilgrimage of the zanies was repeated after the war in China and in Cuba.

While Hollander's account is admirably fair, I think he underestimates two aspects of these travels, and as a result is both too critical in some respects and not critical enough in others. First, he does not seem to me to make sufficient allowance for the quite genuinely attractive side of these Communist

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In earlier epochs, a critic tormented only the writers...

Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world—though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst—the cant of criticism is the most tormenting.

Laurence Sterne

In ours, he torments everybody.

Recently a middle-aged father published a book about his sordid adventures in massage parlors, wife-swapping communes and the worlds of easy sex and prostitution. The critics were grateful to Gay Talese. *Newsweek* said that "Talese's research has an awesome solidity about it." *Vogue* was proud of "... Gay's triumph over the puritanical strictures of Ocean City, strictures that so inhibited him that he didn't even masturbate until his second year in college." And the *Chicago Tribune* – a newspaper respectable primarily in its own eyes—turned its enthusiasm into promotion by running excerpts of *Thy Neighbor's Wife* for Chicagoland families to read.

The state of literary criticism today strongly confirms Laurence Sterne's warning: the cant of criticism *is* the most tormenting. To make things worse, the modern media have transformed the critic into a midwife of mass consciousness. Regardless of what we wish to know or ignore, we live with cultural events and their consequences —as interpreted by the modern critic. Sadly, what passes for "cultural criticism" in *Time, Esquire, Chicago Tribune, Ladies Home Journal,* et al., amounts to an elitist, moral shoddiness.

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societies, which is evident even in the midst of the misery inflicted by a Communist regime, and in spite of it—the warm humanity of most Russians, for example, or the exuberance of the Spanish-African mixture in Cuba. Secondly, he makes no allowance for sheer dishonesty. Thus, I find it hard to believe that the deplorable Dean Hewlett Johnson of Canterbury really thought that in spite of its unconcealed atheist propaganda the USSR was closer to the Christian ideal than the non-Communist world. As for George Bernard Shaw, who probably never "believed" anything in his life, the preposterous comments on Soviet society which emanated from him are most likely to be explained by his overriding passion for buffoonery.

Hollander is concerned not only to chronicle but also to ask how it came about that educated men and women, with trained minds, could throw critical judgment to the winds and come up with such grotesquely misleading findings. One factor, he thinks, is the skill of the host countries. In a chapter entitled "The Techniques of Hospitality" he analyzes the methods used by Communist governments to insure that the "pilgrims" are suitably welcomed, housed, fed (this is a very important item), hoodwinked by the elaborate faking of selected areas for show, and, above all, flattered. The maxim "Flattery gets you nowhere" would hardly seem to apply to the case of Shaw in Russia, or dozens of others.

The last chapter, the most thoughtful in the book, examines the nature and consequences of the estrangement of Western intellectuals from their own societies, and in particular tries to trace the sources of and reasons for this estrangement. Hollander adduces such elements as the growing conviction by intellectuals of their own indispensability, coupled with society's inadequate recognition of their value, and the inability of intellectuals to adapt to the growing secularization of society. I find some other reasons advanced by Hollander more convincing: the decline of authority in most Western countries; emotional discontent within the individual, which expresses itself in rejection of society; and, above all, the vested interest of the mass media in publicizing the defects of society in the most colorful maner—a process which in Britain, at any rate, has been considerably encouraged by overt and covert Marxist propaganda, especially in schools and universities. In the case of some fellow-traveling pilgrims (as George Watson has argued), there may also be an innate pull toward violence.

THIS book, if it does nothing else, should destroy one myth—that intellectuals, by definition, always stand for freedom. Hollander's pages abound with instances of intellectuals who readily jump to believe the wildest stories about injustice in their own society, or any other they detest, while refusing to accept the most damning evidence of abuses and injustice in the societies which they are determined to admire. I suppose the myth of the freedom-loving intellectual owes much to the association with the old pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia, but many members of that class were also ready to betray freedom in Russia in 1917.

One problem is not tackled by Hollander: why were there so many Jews among the American intellectuals searching for utopia in Russia, or China, or Cuba, and motivated in their search by hatred for the United States? Perhaps simply because the proportion of Jews among all intellectuals is generally high? Or is there some more profound reason?

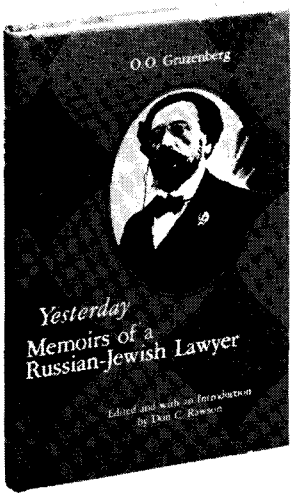
A Life in Politics

JAVITS: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PUBLIC MAN. By JACOB K. JAVITS, with RAFAEL STEINBERG. *Houghton Mifflin. 527 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by NATHAN GLAZER

JACOB K. JAVITS served longer in the United States Senate than any other Senator from New York

NATHAN GLAZER *is professor of education and sociology at Harvard and co-editor of the* Public Interest.



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"IT GOT HEFTY COVERAGE — network TV news footage, ink and pix in the press, mention in hourly radio headlines. 'It' was a pro-ERA rally at the Lincoln Memorial. Guess how many of America's women turned out for this major media event: a) 100,000 b) 10,000 c) 1,000. Right. But look at it this way: If each of the demonstrators can persuade just one state legislator somewhere to vote for it, ERA may still squeak through before June 30, 1982."

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State. One of his proudest moments, he tells us, was the day he surpassed the record of Robert F. Wagner, Sr. "My Senate colleagues voted a resolution of commendation, the Mayor of New York City, Ed Koch, issued a proclamation of 'public tribute,' and the press was in constant attendance."

For someone born on the Lower East Side, and whose father was a janitor, it is a record to be proud of. But after the initial chapters of this book, the story does not make a very interesting or revealing autobiography. The years of struggle and arrival involve the reader—and perhaps the writer—more than the years of accomplishment and service. I count no fewer than eight-and-a-half chapters devoted to Javits's political campaigns, or to the maneuvering behind his decisions to run for office, against, generously, twelve devoted to his work in office, as Congressman and Senator. The former are vivid, with Javits seeming to remember every nuance of campaigns now twenty-five years old; the latter seem—well, perfunctory.

Javits was involved in most of the major issues of policy that arose in the Senate during his long service. There are chapters here on health, on public support of the arts, on civil rights, on labor legislation, on pension reform, on the New York City financial crisis of 1975, on international questions, and more than one on the Middle East. In all these areas Javits played a role, both in proposing legislation and in working with fellow Senators and other political leaders. But little new light is thrown on the development of policy in these areas. The discussion of his career has the character of a summary of events being spearheaded by others, with interventions by Javits that were rarely decisive.

This is not to speak against Javits's commitment or his effectiveness; it is only to acknowledge his situation as a member of the minority party in the Senate, and of the small liberal wing of that party to boot. (He might finally have taken over as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee when Republicans became the majority in 1980, but he was defeated in his last campaign.) And yet one suspects there are interesting things Javits could have told were he so inclined. During his term as a Republican Senator from New York, there were Republican Presidents for twelve years. He must have had enormous influence in one key area: appointing federal judges, federal prosecutors, and circuit-court judges in New York State. He was, after all, a lawyer, and had practiced in New York, and his brother still ran his old law firm. One wonders how he exercised his influence here, and with what effect. There is not a hint in this book.

Javits seems to have worked out for himself a position in which he was, for thirty years or more, im-

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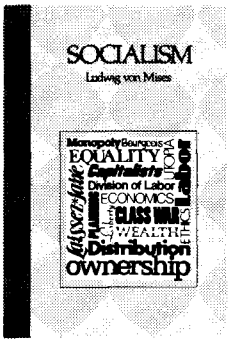

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pregnable: a Jewish liberal Republican, a strong supporter of Israel, running often with the backing of the Liberal party, in a state with a large Jewish electorate which has never been very committed to party loyalty as such. The Jews of New York have voted too often over the years for the Socialists, the American Labor party, or the Liberal party to feel that their dominant Democratic inclinations should prevail against the right man, if he is a liberal. And thus Republicans are elected to state and city office more frequently than any simple poll of party identification would suggest. And so with Javits: as a candidate he could not lose, even if as a legislator and policy-maker he inevitably played a fairly modest role.

JAVITS makes very little of his Jewishness, and of how it affected his career, for good or ill. Over and over he tells us he did not encounter anti-Semitism, or, if he did, that he resolutely ignored it. He did cultivate the interests that affected Jewish voters, and was occasionally able to depict an opponent as insufficiently committed to Israel. But he says very little about the ethnic aspect of New York State politics in general, though here too there must be a great deal he could tell us.

Perhaps his discretion on this point has something to do with the fact that, despite his lengthy career and all the honors he has earned, he remains an anomalous figure in New York politics: a Republican appealing to Jews, a strong liberal appealing to conservative upstate voters. During the last, disastrous campaign of 1980, Governor Carey referred to Javits's seat as "the Jewish seat," but he was speaking of the Democratic primary, and suggesting that it was natural for the "Jewish seat," if there was one, to be held by a Democrat.

Javits's discretion extends to other figures in New York and national politics. Governor Rockefeller gets a full portrait, as does Thomas E. Dewey, but Herbert Lehman, whom Javits succeeded, and Daniel P. Moynihan, with whom he served in the Senate for his last two years, make no appearances. Nor do we find any reflections on politics in general or on how policy-making has changed during the last thirty years.

THE most interesting chapters in the book concern the story of Javits's rise, and his campaigns, particularly the last. Certainly there is enough here to occasion thought on what may be happening politically in New York and the United States. His opponent in the Republican primary, Alfonse D'Amato, was unknown in the state. "By the end of the primary campaign," Javits writes "I had been endorsed by almost all the trade unions, by the *Times*, the *Post*, the *Daily News*, the Buffalo *Courier-Express*, . . . and by many radio and television stations. . . . Former President Gerald Ford appeared in New York . . . to endorse me, . . . nine republican Senators . . . campaigned for me. D'Amato had been endorsed by all the ultra-conservative organizations, including the National Rifle Associations. . . ."

What then could have happened to defeat Javits? He refers to an error—announcing too late that he would run (but he was truly undecided); and to another error—putting too much campaign money into telephone banks, not enough into television. Though he does not place much emphasis on the issues of his age and health, they were of course factors as well. But is there nothing else to say? Has a change occurred in the electorate? In the issues that influence it? In the structure of the Republican party? The role of the mass media? Is there a new conservatism?

There has to be a better story in Jacob Javits's long career in public office than the one he has chosen to tell us. One hopes his papers will soon be made available to researchers and historians who can investigate fully this career and its significance.

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Fighting Castro

TOCAYO: A CUBAN RESISTANCE LEADER'S TRUE STORY. By ANTONIO NAVARRO. *Sandown Books. 270 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

THE exile memoir is not normally the most valuable guide to the history of a revolution. The defeated have too many failures of their own to explain and excuse; distance—both emotional and intellectual—is often impossible to maintain; few authors of this kind of book really possess the ability to relate their own story to the larger process through which they have lived. The literature of the Cuban revolution suffers from all of these deficiencies in greater than usual measure, possibly because so many who now oppose Castro were at least for a time in his party.

A cursory glance at the life of the author of these recollections would not encourage one to expect them to advance much beyond the limitations of the genre. The son of a poor but respectable family, Antonio Navarro married fortuitously into one of the island's leading families and became a major executive in his father-in-law's textile manufacturing empire. Both personally and—in a guarded way, it is suggested—in a business sense Navarro's in-laws were deeply involved with the dictator Fulgencio Batista; Navarro and his wife Avis were habitués of Havana's smart embassy set; but they were not "political" in the sense that, like most wealthy Cubans from 1898 on, they preferred to concentrate their energies in business, social life, and foreign travel, and allow the task of governing to fall into the hands of successive generations of corrupt, self-seeking politicos and "generals."

With the advent of Castro to power in 1959, Navarro and his family found an entire way of life rapidly swept away, and with it the family fortunes. With his wife safely in Miami, he entered the underground resistance to Castro (under the *nom de guerre* "Tocayo"), and beneath the cover of a sugar-merchandising business, assisted in the rescue of various democratic opposition leaders. He was eventually arrested and detained under extremely harrowing psychological conditions, finally able to escape to the United States through the personal intervention of an old friend who had become Foreign Minister of Brazil. Today he lives in Florida and is the executive of a major multinational corporation.

Tocayo is not, however, an idealized reconstruction of a vanished past or a lament for lost privilege, still less one more tiresome disquisition on how Castro "betrayed" his own revolution. Instead, it is an extremely intelligent and sensitive account of those crucial months between 1959 and 1962—that is, between the fall of Batista and the consummation of a marriage between Castro's personal revolutionary organization and the Communist party, and the subsequent realignment of Cuba internationally with the Soviet Union. Navarro takes us back to that moment when the outcome of events could not be known, and thus strips away the veneer of inevitability which subsequently envelops (and masks the truth about) so many historical developments.

Specifically, *Tocayo* charts four cardinal points crucial to the course of the Cuban drama. The first is an account of the last moments of the old Cuba, and of the confusion, hopes, and illusions that attended the new as it came to birth. Here Navarro combines some extremely mordant observations about the *ancien régime* with an acute awareness of the submerged currents of class and racial resentment which Castro effectively exploited. At the same time, he tries to explain the peculiar rela-

MARK FALCOFF *is a resident scholar at the Center for Hemispheric Studies, American Enterprise Institute.*

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tionship between the ramshackle political structure in Cuba, which owed much to four hundred years of Spanish military rule, and the far more modern economic culture which modeled itself as much as possible on the United States. It was this anomalous link between two worlds which created a serious vacuum of legitimacy in Cuban society—a vacuum which Castro was able to fill without ever articulating a coherent political program. In a society without politicians capable of realizing concrete goals, Navarro suggests, people transferred their expectations to the limitless horizons offered by a messiah.

THIS leads to a second theme: the conflicting reactions among the Cuban upper class to the new order of things. While most of Navarro's friends' parents, his father-in-law, and his own aunt and uncle responded to the Castro revolution by taking refuge in a cynicism toward Cuban politics generally, or lapsed into a sort of reflective (but inactive) opposition, Navarro and many of his contemporaries found themselves swept up in the wave of idealism and enthusiasm which engulfed the island. Legend has it—and Castro himself never tires of repeating it to foreign visitors with expressions of genuine hurt and disappointment—that Cuba's "radicalization" was the natural consequence of a blind resistance by the island's elite (and the United States) to the smallest reforms he tried to institute. Navarro's detailed account of his and his friends' attempt to collaborate with the revolution should put some of this fantasy to rest.

In the case of his father-in-law's textile mills, Navarro had received personal assurances from both Castro and the new Minister of Industries, Ernesto ("Ché") Guevara, that there was no political or economic reason to think they would be expropriated. Yet within weeks, a government "interventor" had arrived to take charge. When Navarro appealed the matter to Castro in the only way he could—by cornering him at an embassy reception—he received the astonishing reply, "I don't do everything that gets done in this country. Don't forget that." Guevara was more honest. After keeping Navarro waiting all night for an interview (the minister's nocturnal habits were one of his many peculiarities), Guevara received him nearly at dawn and responded to his story with the suggestion that he read Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*. In other words, as far as the revolution was concerned, the fact of guilt or innocence was largely irrelevant.

THIS point is germane to the third theme of the book—the gradual identification of the Cuban revolution with Marxism-Leninism. Castro sympathizers often assert that the eventual political configuration of the regime was determined by economic and social imperatives (for example, land reform). Navarro believes that this is precisely the opposite of the truth. Communism appealed to Castro, he says, because, with its holistic view of economic and political life, it held out the prospect of unlimited power. Communism also offered the Cuban leader a cadre of disciplined sympathizers to carry out the humdrum tasks of day-to-day administration for which Castro's bohemian associates were temperamentally unsuited. In this, even many of the old elite concurred; as one mill owner remarked to Navarro, "You could always count on the Communist members of the union leadership; they were *responsible*."

From which it follows that the deterioration of U.S.-Cuban relations after 1959 operated basically apart from American choices and actions. This point has already been amply documented in the work of Theodore Draper and in the memoirs of Ambassador Philip W. Bonsal, but Navarro is able to add a useful psychological and cultural dimension to the discussion. "There is something about a leftist revolution in a developing country," he writes, "which, like a Greek tragedy, has a quality of inevitability; it has to commit itself eventually to a major ideological current and to the country which most prominently endorses it and has the resources to help the little brothers."

It was not merely that the U.S. business and political communities found Castro's "reforms" unpalatable, or that the Soviets were searching for a beachhead in the Western hemisphere, but that Castro himself—Jesuit-trained, and as Spanish as he was Cuban—possessed an acute distaste for the distinctive hallmarks of American political culture: pluralism, discussion, disagreement, debate. "Whoever opposed Castro's policies," Navarro explains, "was not against his *ideas*, he was against *Castro*, and therefore against *the people* . . . love me, love my ideas; hate my ideas, hate me."

FINALLY, Navarro turns to the growth of a resistance movement in Cuba, and in so doing brings to light certain points which seem somehow to have slipped through the interstices of popular recall. In the first place, the leadership of the anti-Castro forces in 1961-62 was drawn largely from democratic circles, particularly the labor movement, where the populist, left-of-center *Auténtico* party had long held sway. (Most of Batista's col-

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
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laborators fled immediately after the fall of the dictator and were not conspicuous in the subsequent clandestine resistance.) Second, by no means all of the operatives in the underground came from well-to-do backgrounds; as in the government camp itself, the counterrevolution drew together people from the working class, peasantry, and the liberal professions. Third, although the CIA was active in organizing an invasion of exiles, in Cuba itself, if Navarro's experience is any guide, the anti-Castro movements operated more or less autonomously. In other words, the resistance was no invention of the United States.

THESE pages force one to consider how active and widespread that movement was, and how anxiously it waited upon an invasion of exiles to signal the moment for a general uprising. In retrospect this seems naive, yet at the time it did not appear as outlandish as it does today. While the circle of totalitarian control was steadily closing, Navarro reveals that as late as 1961 there were many Cubans, including professed partisans and functionaries of the regime, who hoped for something else. The logical site for a landing—in central Cuba—was rejected by Washington for bizarre reasons since outlined in Peter Wyden's book, *The Bay of Pigs*. When the force failed to establish a foothold at the site eventually selected, and President Kennedy's nerve failed him, thousands of courageous men and women within Cuba were abandoned to Castro's secret police; Navarro simply had the good fortune to have been evacuated some time before.

One cannot help reflecting, too, on the role of some of Navarro's friends—men who left a secure existence in Florida to fight for their country, some to die on the beaches. Here was a class of playboys who suddenly learned their civics lessons, but too late. Had they diverted a fraction of their potential idealism and capacity for sacrifice into the island's public life a few short years before, the whole history of Cuba, and indeed of the Western hemisphere, might have been different.

Confronting the Holocaust

THE HOLOCAUST AND THE HISTORIANS. By LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ. *Harvard University Press. 187 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by MARTIN GILBERT

BROWSING in a London bookstore recently, I chanced upon a new biography of Hitler by a British academic historian. Turning to the four pages on the Holocaust, out of some 86 pages on the war, I read that, in facing up to the Nazi persecution, "the Jews"—so the author informed me—"had decided to confront Nazism with an attitude that, for them, was virtuous traditionalism: obey, do not provoke, and the crisis will pass"—except in some so-called "notorious cases" where ghetto leaders and Nazis cooperated. Not one single instance of revolt—not even the Warsaw ghetto revolt—was mentioned. As a historian deep in a study of the Jewish fate in World War II and of efforts at resistance, ghetto by ghetto, forest by forest, and camp by camp, and as one familiar with so many hundreds of accounts of courage, both of groups and of individuals, I was angered and offended. But I did nothing, sought no copy of the book for review, took issue with it in no learned (or even popular) journal.

Lucy S. Dawidowicz's new book shows me how wrong it is to remain silent. For my single example was typical of many comments on the Holocaust which she documents and examines. Herself perturbed by the treatment of the Holocaust in history books, Mrs. Dawidowicz, the author of *The War Against the Jews*, has applied her considerable historical knowledge and analytical skills to this neglected theme.

Mrs. Dawidowicz spans a large subject in a brief space. Her first concern is the absence of the Holo-

MARTIN GILBERT, *a new contributor, is the official biographer of Winston Churchill and the author of several works of Jewish history, including* Final Journey *and, most recently,* Auschwitz and the Allies *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston).*

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caust from general histories in Britain and the United States. Her examples, widely and wisely chosen, reveal that the Jews and their fate in wartime Europe are largely portrayed—or rather not portrayed—as "nonpersons and nonsubjects" in the United States, and with "disdain" in England, despite the work of several recent, mostly Jewish, historians to redress the balance. She concludes that the reasons for this neglect are twofold: first, generally, "a lack of interest in the fate of the Jews"; second, as far as certain British writers are concerned, "a form of social prejudice" which she sees often associated with "an anti-Semitism of contempt."

One of the chapters of this book tries to answer the argument that the Holocaust was "no more" than an integral part of the general and much wider wartime killings, the losses inevitable in a long and bloody war. Mrs. Dawidowicz is emphatic that no other people "was chosen for total extinction," and argues her case with considerable conviction and passion. The central point is so well expressed that it deserves to be quoted in full:

> Every country and people ravaged by the war and by the German occupation eventually returned to a normal existence. All the nations, the victims now become victors, the aggressors now defeated, once again assumed their positions in the political order. Having mourned their dead, commemorated their martyrs and heroes, all the peoples of Europe, including the Germans, recovered from their wounds, rebuilt their shattered cities. London, Warsaw, and Rotterdam, as well as Berlin and Dresden, were reconstructed. They restored their factories and their marketplaces. They resuscitated their institutions of learning and culture. They reestablished their armed forces. But the annihilation of the 6 million European Jews brought an end with irrevocable finality to the thousand-year-old culture and civilization of Ashkenazic Jewry, destroying the continuity of Jewish history.

In her section on Germany, Mrs. Dawidowicz contributes a valuable essay on the "scholarly" anti-Semitism that informed Nazi history, and on the problems involved for postwar German historians in coming to grips with wartime crimes aganst the Jews. Thus, an article published in 1953 by West Germany's Institute for Contemporary History, written in fact by a converted Jew who had been forced out of a professorship in 1934 for "racial" reasons, argued that what was "most urgently" required of German historical writing was "to keep distance from all tendencies toward self-abasement and also from apologetics." Not for another sixteen years did the first breakthrough take place, with Karl Dietrich Bracher's history of the Third Reich and its origins, *The German Dictatorship*. This book—unlike many of its British or American counterparts—recognized, as Mrs. Dawidowicz puts it, "that from the start the Nazis assigned primacy of place, in doctrine and in action, to make hatred of the Jews, with all its tragic consequences, a cardinal feature of the state's policy." Anti-Semitism and the destruction of the Jews were "in the very center" of Bracher's book, integrated into the political and military developments of the time. Bracher is also commended by Mrs. Dawidowicz for urging Germans to seize the "opportunities of an educational process drawing on the experience of the past."

No such praise is meted out to the Soviet and Polish historians whose work Mrs. Dawidowicz next passes in review. Even Ilya Ehrenburg's graphic *Black Book* of testimonies and documents, widely circulated in 1946 in English, never appeared in the Soviet Union, where it was written, and the fate of whose Jews it describes. In her Soviet section Mrs. Dawidowicz scrupulously documents not only the "erasing" of Jews (as Jews) from Soviet history, but also the growing public propaganda which links Nazism with Zionism as part of a single evil.

Franz Borkenau

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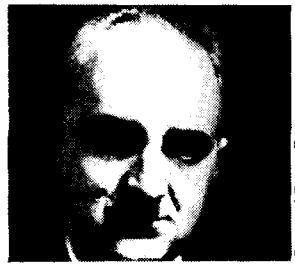

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These links were made forcibly at the time of the Six-Day War of 1967. They were repeated with equal vehemence after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. It was "Zionist capital" which had helped "to strengthen the Hitlerite regime in Germany," one Soviet publication then declared, while another stated: "Not without the help of the leaders of Zionism did hundreds of thousands of ordinary Jews meet their deaths in the gas chambers."

Soviet practice and Soviet historiography seem fixed in a deep groove. But the Polish experience is far more complex, and in considerable flux. Those who follow today's developments among Polish historians will be well served by Mrs. Dawidowicz's chapter on the intricacies of past historiography in that country: what she calls "history done, redone, and undone." Bitterly but justly she accuses Polish Communist historians of having "themselves put the finishing touches to the Final Solution of the Jewish question which the Germans had so efficiently accomplished for them." Mrs. Dawidowicz's words were written before the most recent developments in Poland, which have also had the effect of challenging Polish attitudes to the Jewish past, and may yet result in a reversal of earlier abysmal trends.

THE last focus of this survey is Holocaust history as written by Jews, and in Israel. Here Mrs. Dawidowicz voices a necessary caution about the danger that exists for Jewish historians to overemphasize and inflate the aspect of resistance to the Nazis. Her point is well taken, but it leads to some unfortunate weaknesses. There seems little awareness, for example, of the continuing and substantial researches in this field (much of it still unavailable in English), including the work of several survivors and scholars, among them Shalom Cholawski on western White Russia, Shmuel Krakowski on central and southern Poland, and Shmuel Spector on Volhynia, as well as other important scholarship proceeding under the auspices of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry in Jerusalem. Given the sensitiveness of the subject (as noted in my opening reflection), it would have been a service if Mrs. Dawidowicz had at least indicated the scale and nature of some of the research in progress.

But Mrs. Dawidowicz's more general point, which she makes with considerable emphasis in her section on the Jewish Councils, is certainly a valid one—namely, the extent to which the "suppurating wounds" of the Holocaust still affect Jewish historians and make it difficult for them "to confront Holocaust history." Even so, as she points out, the work of such scholars as Philip Friedman and Isaiah Trunk does adhere to high standards of objectivity while also establishing facts and a methodology for future analytical studies.

Mrs. Dawidowicz refers at one point to Hannah Arendt's sweeping charge against Jewish leadership in northern Europe ("Wherever Jews lived, there were recognized Jewish leaders, and this leadership, almost without exception, cooperated in one way or another, for one reason or another, with the Nazis") and to Raul Hilberg's earlier and even more scathing charges of Jewish passivity. This leads us back to the issue of the continued belittling, denying, or ignoring of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, its scale, and its nature. In confronting and challenging this ongoing denial, Mrs. Dawidowicz's short but closely argued book performs a major service. It will have fulfilled its purpose the better if it encourages other historians to answer, as and when they are made, each of the new libels and accusations that have become common in the press, in mass-market books, and even in "scholarly" publications. Would that the historical profession as a whole adhered to Mrs. Dawidowicz's scholarly rigor and moral vigilance.

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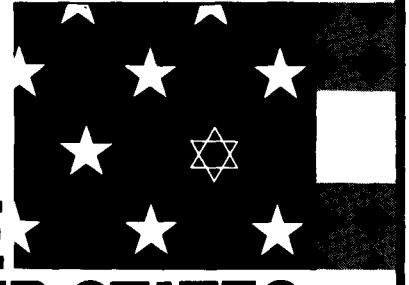

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The Forgotten War

THE STRUGGLE FOR AFGHANISTAN. By NANCY PEABODY NEWELL and RICHARD S. NEWELL. *Cornell University Press. 236 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

IN THE immediate wake of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979, it was widely predicted that the USSR's international reputation would suffer a serious decline because of this naked act of aggression against a defenseless Third World country. Cited in evidence were such subsequent events as condemnations of the invasion by the United Nations, an official denunciation by the Islamic Conference, and statements by certain Third World spokesmen about the dangers of the nonaligned movement's pro-Soviet tilt. No matter what the outcome of the conflict, it was said, the Soviets would pay a high price for the invasion in terms of their diplomatic and propaganda goals.

It is now clear that the Afghanistan war has cost the Soviets little in international prestige. America has again assumed its accustomed position as chief hate object of the international "peace movement." Despite a pattern of Soviet aggression of which the Afghan invasion is the most dramatic manifestation, strong and persistent pressure has been brought to bear to convince the U.S. to cajole the Israelis into accepting a PLO-dominated state, guarantee a share of governing power in El Salvador to the Cuban-backed rebels, and soften its drive for a Western military buildup. In contrast, the war in Afghanistan has steadily receded in significance, both in the mind of the public and as a priority for Western diplomats, many of whom act as if a rebel capitulation would be a relief, and not a cause for mourning. Even the Muslim world has seemingly come to terms with the likelihood of a protracted Soviet occupation of an Islamic state, and this despite the increased threat to the internal stability of Middle Eastern governments that would logically follow from a permanent Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

There are many reasons for the relegation of Afghanistan to the status of side show, but certainly an important factor is the paucity of reliable information from the battlefield. Where sympathetic American and European journalists send regular dispatches from rebel-held enclaves in El Salvador, the Soviets have effectively prevented on-the-spot coverage in Afghanistan. The only non-Communist journalists permitted visas are those who can be relied on to present to the West a reasonable facsimile of the Soviet version of events. Western reporters are left with the unappealing alternative of joining the rebels and risking the consequences of capture by the Soviets or the Soviet-controlled Afghan army. It is powerful testimony to the fear generated by the Soviet Union today that very few reporters have chosen to carry on the long-established, and often noble, tradition of guerrilla-war coverage in Afghanistan.

THE Soviets derive rather substantial benefits from the absence of on-the-scene reporting. As Richard and Nancy Peabody Newell observe in *The Struggle for Afghanistan*, the Afghan resistance movement has conducted one of the most impressive popular uprisings of this century. But because of the inability of reporters to provide accurate coverage of the war, the rebels remain an enigma, and their exploits unknown. Similarly, few in the West are familiar with the acts of brutality committed by the Red Army or the official Afghan military forces. These include massacres of genocidal proportions in several villages, and the routine employment of terror tactics, including the use of nerve gas, against the civilian population.

ARCH PUDDINGTON *is executive director of the League for Industrial Democracy and editor of* Workers Under Communism, *a new journal which will begin publication this winter.*

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The Soviets were not, of course, the direct targets of the initial uprising, although the de facto satellization of the country was clearly an important cause. The most compelling chapters of *The Struggle for Afghanistan* are those dealing with the events leading up to the rebellion and which, along the way, provide a revealing assessment of the indigenous Afghan Communists.

The Newells, Afghan specialists who have lived in and written extensively on that country, have provided an interpretation that is a much-needed antidote to reports in the Western press which have stressed both the unpopularity of the Communists and the "backwardness" of the Afghan people, an "evenhanded" treatment which implies that the benighted attitudes of the latter somehow justify the repressive policies of the former. As the Newells demonstrate, the Communists who attained power in the April 1979 coup were from the very beginning intent not on reforming the fabric of Afghan society, but on destroying it, in order to bolster their own tenuous power base. Moreover, this "revolution from the top" was carried out with all the arrogance and cruelty that have become the trademarks of Communist regimes around the world.

LIKE other Communist movements, the People's Democratic party (PDP) enjoyed little popular support at the time of its seizure of power. In the case of the PDP, however, this lack of support was even more pronounced, as Afghanistan never developed an urban proletariat or trade-union movement from which Communist cadres could be drawn. With no backing in the countryside (and little chance of gaining it), PDP recruitment was limited to students and a small section of the Kabul intelligentsia. Its leadership was no more impressive than its numbers. The Newells depict the most prominent PDP figures—Nur Muhammad Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, and Babrak Karmal—as petty demagogues whose ideas consisted of archaic Marxist slogans and whose principal activity was fighting the inevitable factional battles which periodically rocked the party.

What the Communists lacked in sophistication and popularity they made up for in determination and a knack for intrigue. Crucial here was the formation of Marxist cells within the armed forces, an achievement made possible by Soviet aid policies designed, for decades, to facilitate the eventual conquest of Afghanistan. The Soviet aid strategy was highly selective; humanitarian assistance was nonexistent, and the many impoverished areas of the country were ignored entirely. Non-military aid emphasized the construction of roads, particularly those linking the two countries, and the improvement of the country's communications network. Both programs proved quite helpful when the invasion was launched. Other aid programs had as their chief priority the development of friendly relations with key Kabul bureaucrats. In the military sphere, the Soviets spent years training and indoctrinating promising young Afghan officers; not surprisingly, these officers came to view Soviet sponsorship as the key to their career advancement. Within the military, they constituted a fifth column which proved instrumental in both the bloodless coup of 1973, which brought Muhammad Daoud to power, and the far more violent coup of 1979, in which Daoud and his family were killed and his government replaced by the PDP.

The Communists who replaced Daoud were mainly drawn from the PDP's Khalq ("Masses") faction, and consisted of men who, according to the Newells, demonstrated no capacity for governing a country. Under the leadership of Taraki and Amin, the Communists launched an immediate, radical program aimed at the Sovietization of Afghan society. Their policies included various social and economic measures—radical land redistribution, the emancipation of women, currency changes—an ambitious agenda under the most advantageous of circumstances. But the Communists went even further, attempting to enforce far-reaching changes in Afghanistan's cultural life guaranteed to alienate the traditionalist and independent populace. The Soviet pattern of primary

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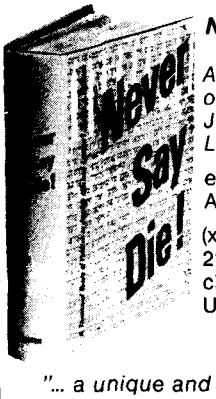

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and secondary education was introduced, and Russian was made a required language. School curriculum was given a heavy infusion of Marxist ideology. And in a gratuitous gesture calculated to enrage this devoutly Muslim people, the country's flag was redesigned to reflect the regime's Marxist creed; instead of the previous Islamic green, the flag was now dominated by Communist red.

Communism in Afghanistan thus followed an all-too-familiar pattern. The Khalqists spoke the rhetoric of social justice, but carried out policies which sought the destruction of the regional, tribal, and ethnic relationships that gave meaning to Afghan society. The emancipation of women was transformed into an all-out assault on the family as a means of atomizing the population and rendering it more open to Marxist social engineering. Education was made a vehicle for Communist indoctrination. Even land reform was looked on with suspicion by the poor peasants who presumably stood to gain from it; in their view, this was yet another device to enable the bureaucracy to accumulate more arbitrary power.

IF THE Soviets *have* suffered a loss of prestige because of their Afghan involvement, it is not due to their having invaded the country, but rather to their failure to bring the war to a swift conclusion. Although the Newells dismiss the fatuous notion that Afghanistan will be for the Soviets what Vietnam was for the U.S., they are convinced that "pacification" of the country will require a massive increase in Soviet troop levels as well as a systematic and stepped-up campaign of terror directed at the civilian population in the provinces.

Initially, no doubt, such measures would provoke a new wave of international disapproval. But unless the non-Communist world should respond in kind, the Soviets would probably conclude that the advantages of a determined show of will in Afghanistan outweighed the temporary costs of diplomatic censure and, possibly, trade dislocation. The Newells, in fact, believe that a principal objective of the Soviet invasion has always been the intimidation of neighboring states in Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf. Ironically, while the rebels have created significant problems for the Kremlin, their defiance has at the same time provided an opportunity for the Soviets to demonstrate their determination to crush anyone who opposes them.

The ramifications of a clear-cut Soviet victory—both for the Persian Gulf region and the global balance—would be devastating: As the Newells point out:

> Having demonstrated that it can subdue the most stubborn of Muslim peoples, [the Soviet Union] would command a number of avenues for further expansion. Among the steps it might take are infiltration of minority secessionist movements; continued encouragement of Marxist opposition parties; subversion of non-Marxist elites, including military officers with grievances against neighboring countries. Having established its presence at the region's doorstep and a willingness to pay the political cost of aggression in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union would have a unique opportunity to exercise ever greater influence and power.

Considering the high stakes involved in the outcome of this struggle, the Newells find the response of the non-Communist world highly inadequate, reflecting both weakness and illusion. The Carter administration is faulted on two counts: first, for having ignored the geopolitical implications of the coup which originally elevated the Communists to power; second, for failing to develop a military response to the Soviet invasion, and thus tacitly conceding Afghanistan to Soviet domination.

As for the Newells' own policy prescriptions, these have serious flaws—especially in their strange belief that American insistence on the creation of a Palestinian state would serve as a means of enlisting Arab support for a policy of arming the Afghan rebels. Nevertheless, their major contention, that our goal should be the strengthening of the rebels, seems a sound one.

Two arguments have been advanced against this view. Some contend that however wrong the Soviet occupation may be, the rebels—as conservative, religious zealots who practice systematic sexual discrimination—are unworthy of encouragement or aid. To their credit, the Newells ignore this shameful reasoning altogether; for them, the only issues are the consequences, both for the Afghan people and the free world, of Communism and Soviet imperialism. A more serious consideration is that support for the rebels will resolve nothing while insuring the shedding of more blood. Ultimately, this amounts to a rationalization for the Soviet conquest of Afghanistan.

The Afghans themselves have clearly rejected this point of view. To these people, Communism has been an intolerable curse. They have demonstrated an admirable willingness to resist, asking only the means to carry on the fight.

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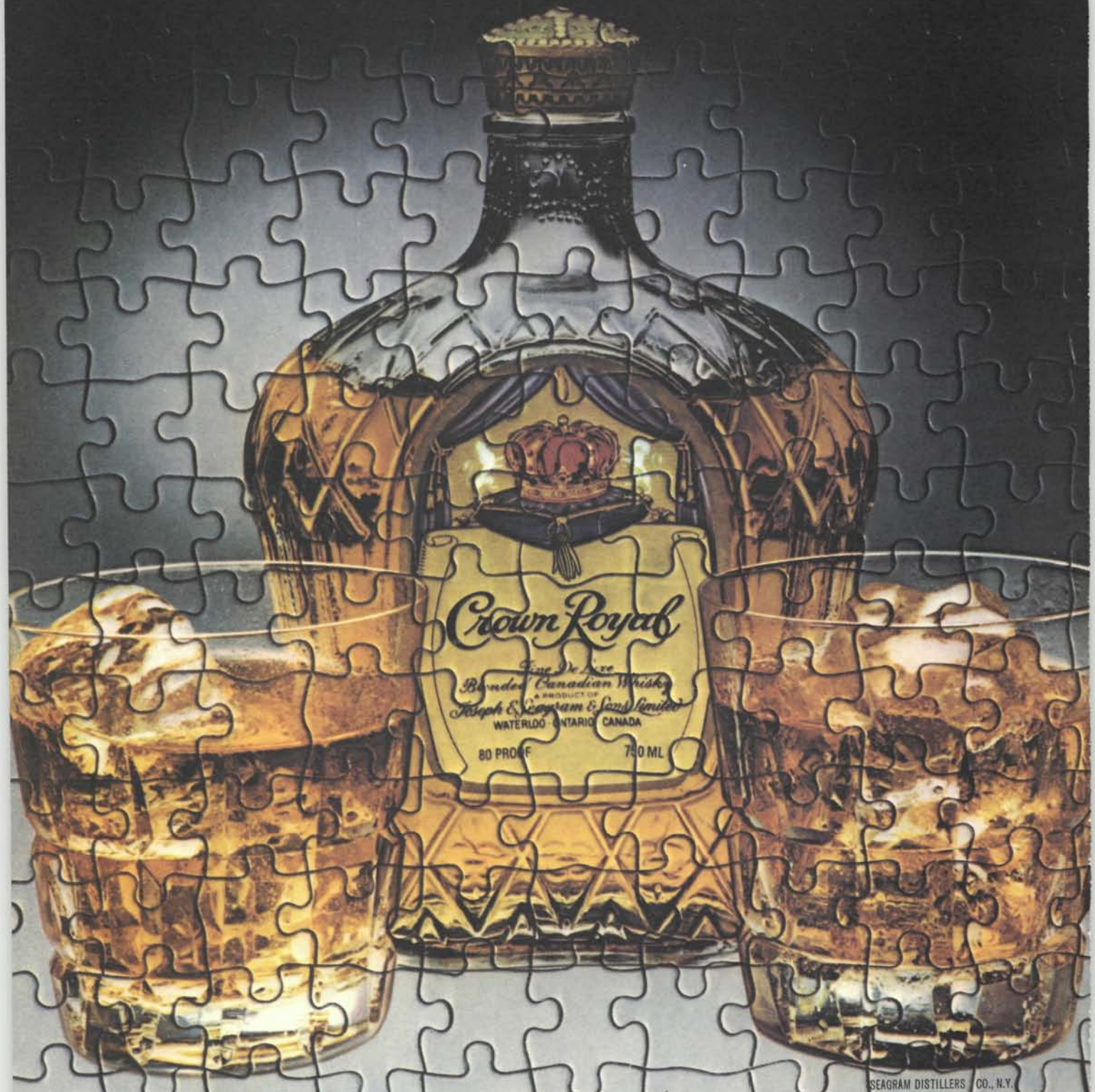

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